

TRANSCRIPT: **LARRY KOKEL** **INTERVIEW**

Mr. Larry Kokel · Founder of Kokel Appraisal Associates

TRANSCRIPT

An interview with Mr. Larry Kokel, Founder of Kokel Appraisal Associates. Kokel is a 1976 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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Mr. Larry Kokel | Transcript
Tyurus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your career?

My name's Larry Kokel. I live in Georgetown, Texas. I'm a real estate appraiser and broker, operate as Kokel-Oberrender-Wood and TexAg Real Estate Services.

Could you tell us a little about your experiences at Texas A&M?

Graduated and started out of Georgetown High School, went to A&M as a freshman, graduated in 1975, actually was in the recreation and parks administration major, started taking ag eco courses as a freshman and was gonna switch majors my junior year but was advised to stay in and receive a masters, so in, in the fall of '75 I entered the Master's of Real Estate program and graduated in ag eco, ag economics with emphasis in land economics real estate and graduated with a master's in 1976 in December.

Can you describe your early career?

A couple years after graduation, I did an internship while at A&M in the governor's office, at that time governor, Dolph Briscoe, was the, Dolph Briscoe was governor, and did some initial ad valorem tax analysis relating the ag use valuation. After graduation, I started with Southwestern Appraisal company, which was an ad valorem tax value appraisal company when they started the county-wide, statewide valuation of property for tax purposes, and I worked there about a year, working in South Texas, and Corpus, and up in the Waco area doing re-evaluation or appraisals for tax purposes. Left there and went to work for the Texas General Land Office and was with the land office and the appraisal division, Jack Kaiser and Sam Bacchanal, both A&M grads were my chief appraiser at the time, and we worked with the General Land State Office of Texas until 1983.

What advice do you have for students of Agricultural Economics?

Oh, when you're a student, everybody's focus is a little bit different as you mature and age. I guess the main thing is, number one, try to go to class and make good grades. Focus on your students. At the same time you need to have a... enjoy the time period. While you're a student, you have the rest of your life to work, so make sure you blend the academics in with the, the social life and meeting friends. I guess the best thing, looking back at A&M, was some of the people I met and still associate with and work with today. Those connections at, at Texas A&M, or any university, can carry on with you and be a vital part of your career as you enter the working world.

How were you able to manage time for family, work and other priorities throughout your career?

Oh, I, I ended up, didn't really plan that way, but both my wife and I, Dorothy, grew up in the Georgetown, Gerald Williamson County area on farms. We ended up livin' there. We stayed in Austin a short time after we got married and I was working for the General Land Office, but we ended up buying a house in Walburg, and when I started my business as Kokel Appraisal in 1983, we were living in really the area we we both grew up so we had a lot of family. So, family's always been a, a vital part of the, the life and, to some degree, never had a chance to get away from it. They were always, family's always been there and still there. So, you know, it sorta came natural. The advice is you have to make sure you take care of work 'cos work is gonna take care of your family. At the same time, the family is a vital part and... make it a balance, and make sure you keep focused, and, and make sure you make — take care of business on both the family life and on the work side.

In your opinion, what does it take to achieve success?

Oh, success is a mental state. I always say busy is a state of mind instead of a financial condition. Same thing with success. You have success if all your kids can get a good education and are mentally and physically...and are blessed with good health. Life is a success at that point in time, so... and old professor once said, "You, you live your life. You don't plan it." It was Dr. Schmedemann, and it is good

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advice. I think success is something you take one step at a time and, and when it's all said and done, you hope you did a lot more things good than you did bad, but you just move forward.

What are your thoughts on being selected to the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry?

Oh, it's a, it's an honor to be named to the registry. I've... know a number of people that... past professors and, and, and business associates that are, are, have been head in the registry. Dr. Timm I did not know well, but I knew him a little bit while I was at A&M. I knew him as a person, a professor that really focused on the students, took care of his professors, had a team approach to, to education. I think you have to carry that team approach and putting your best effort forward in your business career, and I think it's an honor to be named to the registry.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I'd just like to thank Texas A&M and the ag eco department for all the many years of support, and I look forward to working with them in the remaining twenty years of my professional career because I'm 61 now and not planning on hanging it up real soon.

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Transcribed by
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