

TRANSCRIPT: RAY SMAISTRLA INTERVIEW

Ray Smaistrla · Senior Vice President of Amegy Bank

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An interview with Mr. Ray Smaistrla, Senior Vice President of Amegy Bank. Smaistrla is a 1985 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

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

Hi, my name is Ray Smaistrla. I, I am a banker in Houston for Amegy Bank currently. Class of '85. And I've got two kids, AnnaLyse and Reid, and I'm married to a beautiful woman named Yolanda.

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

Well I didn't have the full college experience because I had to work pretty much the full time I was here. So, I went to school and went from job to job. And really that's probably a good thing that I had to take several jobs. When I was a junior, I was applying for a job with Dr. Rister and ended up working for him for, for two years, programming the Ag Eco course that became this event. So, it was an interesting year-and-a-half, I guess, that I worked for him. And then I became the TA for this course, so I was the first TA. And then I went through and got my Master's of Ag. And continued to work on campus and graduated and started my professional career.

Can you describe your early career?

My early career, my early career, when I got out of school, I was a bank examiner for Farm Credit Administration. We examined Farm Credit Banks throughout the state, mainly small towns, two weeks at a time. Pretty tough living conditions because there's not many hotels, per Texas. I did that for a year-and-a-half, and then I got a job with Texas Commerce Bank, which became Chase, which became JP Morgan & Chase which is the Chase you see now. In 2006 I left and joined Amegy Bank, which is a large regional bank in Houston, primarily commercial in nature. And that's where I am now, I'm a commercial lender, and I run a nice size group for them.

What advice do you have for students of Agricultural Economics?

Take full advantage of the breadth or the opportunities you have here with in the degree program. When I went through it, it was quite a few electives, and you could turn it into a very meaningful major or a very easy major. If you had the opportunity to challenge yourself and take the tougher course, then do that. Don't, don't take the easy way out.

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

I think it's more of a focus on what you want to do. If you, if you, if you want to manage time, if you want to have time with your family, you, you will do it. You'll find, you'll find a way, you'll put other things off. I work late at night. So, the stuff I can't get done during the day, if I have to coach a soccer game, I go coach the soccer game then go back to work. You have certain things you have to do and certain things you want to do and certain things you should do. You

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can do them all if you prioritize things correctly. But you have to be willing to give up on the other end if you're going to take from right now.

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

I think it takes focus, dedication, and honesty. Really, that's all it takes.

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

I was very surprised when, when I was selected. It's a very big honor because, you know, I don't know how many are recognized in the Registry, but I'm sure there are many types of graduates. So, to be put in a separate class is just humbling.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

You know, I, I think if you work hard, you can achieve any, any success that you want. If you really have the passion for what you're, what you're wanting to do, you'll, you'll achieve success. And don't limit yourself because you can do whatever you feel like you want to do.

Thanks for watching!

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