

**Oral History Interview of  
Clay Deatherage**

**Interviewed by: Monte Monroe  
April 16, 2011  
Anson, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball***

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## Interview Series Background:

This collection features interviews related to the Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball in Anson, Texas. Topics covered include the traditions associated with the ball, the leadership within the Cowboys' Christmas Ball Association, music and Michael Martin Murphey, and the way in which the ball has changed over the years.

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Clay Deatherage of Anson, Texas. Deatherage discusses growing up in Anson, his involvement in 4-H and agriculture, and the central role the Cowboy Christmas Ball played in his family's life. Deatherage also talks about attending Texas A&M and working with the fire department and the Border Patrol.

**Length of Interview:** 00:48:58

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## Keywords

Anson, Texas, Cowboy Christmas Ball, Jones County, Texas, Texas A&M, West Texas music, western swing

**Monte Monroe (MM):**

This is Monte Monroe from Texas Tech University Southwest Collections/Special Collections Library. It is April 16, 2011, and I'm in Anson, Texas, at the event center of the historical Cowboy Christmas Ball. Today I am here with Clay Deatherage, who is a member of the board of the Cowboy Christmas Ball and we're going to talk about his life briefly and his impressions of this wonderful event, the Cowboy Christmas Ball. Clay, if you would, please start and give me your full name and nickname, if any, and date of birth and place of birth.

**Clay Deatherage (CD):**

Clay Deatherage, nicknames would be unacceptable for these purposes, born June 21, 1962, in Anson, Texas.

MM:

Okay, very good. And what are your parent's names?

CD:

John and Judy Deatherage.

MM:

Okay and what was Judy's maiden name?

CD:

Simmons.

MM:

Okay and do you know when they were born?

CD:

Thirty-five? She was born July 27, 1941. He was born July 31, 1935.

MM:

Very good. And what are your grandparent's names? Your dad's first.

CD:

It was Emmett and Myrtle Deatherage.

MM:

And do you know where they were born?

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CD:

No.

MM:

Okay and I can ask that. Now, tell me a little bit about what your home life was like when you were growing up, Clay, where you went to school. What was your elementary school, your high school, things like that? What kind of games or activities you used to be involved in and what your neighborhood was like, some of your friends?

CD:

Well, growing up in Anson, Texas, there was not a lot of choice in schools. Anson schools for all twelve years, and one of the friends I ran around most in school is Tommy Sprayberry who is also an association member. We both live out east of town about a mile apart and we don't even want to get into the things he and I got into, but both of us, all twelve years of school here in Anson. In high school, like most schools, involved in a lot of things, sports, football, our big thing was 4-H, FFA showing cattle.

MM:

What sports did you play?

CD:

Football.

MM:

Okay, what position did you play in football?

CD:

Tackle, both ways.

MM:

Okay and then you say you were involved in 4-H and FFA. Tell me a little bit about those activities.

CD:

Those were primarily the base of—the core of my growing up. I started in 4-H when I was nine, mainly cattle showing projects, good career in 4-H. I was lucky enough to win state in two different areas. I am a former member of the Texas 4-H council. I was former Texas Junior Hereford Association Director. FFA we took a different track, more of the leadership type competitions, judging teams.

MM:

For instance, do you remember what some of those leadership activities, like chapter conducting?

CD:

Very clearly remember chapter conducting, and that was probably one of the most beneficial activities I have ever been involved with as far as usefulness in later life. It carries on today. I serve as our district state Fireman's and Fire Marshall to Firefighter's Association parliamentarian. It was—that ability came from chapter conducting.

MM:

Were you involved in any of the judging contests? Dairy contests or grass judging or livestock judging?

CD:

I did meats and livestock. Donny Kiecher and his family moved here as an ag teacher my freshman year. Previously, Anson had been very successful up through the national level with judging competition. Ag teacher's name was Dennis Ellerbrock. He had moved on, Donny moved in my freshman year and my junior year, our meats team placed ninth at state. That was the first state placing judging team that Donny had coached and it was the first one since Ellerbrock had moved on. That continued on through my career at Texas A&M and was on three senior judging teams there. They judged meats, livestock in livestock and meats evaluations, we called 442-T.

MM:

Now, on your livestock judging, did you win any local, regional, or state awards?

CD:

Not in ag, we were successful at A&M. Probably the high point and the low point of collegiate judging contests came at the same time. Judging, especially meats judging at Texas A&M is very, very serious. One of the national powerhouses, a lot of the other Division 1 colleges are coached by Aggie grads. The year I was on the senior meats team, the end of the season is the International Meats Judging Contest. That year was in South Sioux City, Iowa, at the IBP World Headquarters. There is a traveling trophy that goes with international championships. Once a school wins it three times, it's retired and lives at that school. We went into the international with two legs on the trophy. Illinois came in and they had two legs on the trophy. When it was all done and tallied, Illinois was the international champion by one point. You know, we were so crushed that none of my meats team has international reserve champions on their belt buckles. You know, most places and most teams would have been thrilled to have that on their judging buckle, and we took it so hard that not one of us wanted it on the buckle. Ironically, Dr. Carr, Dr.

Tom Carr, coached the Illinois team and shortly after I graduated, Dr. Carr came to A&M and heads the meats department there today.

MM:

Okay very good. You were talking about the raising Hereford Cattle. As a 4-Her, did you continue to raise Hereford Cattle in your FFA career?

CD:

We kept the cattle separate, nearly embarrassed to admit we would show pigs with ag, but my primary interest in ag was the leadership and the judging. As far as the Hereford cattle go, yes, we do that today.

MM:

Okay very good, very good. I ask all these questions because I did the exact same thing you did. Now, were there any particular—you mentioned a couple of your ag teachers. Were there any other of your teachers growing up that you feel like influenced you or helped you to go onto college and pursue your life's ambition?

CD:

I think there were two teachers that taught in Anson High School at the time that were probably not very popular. I won't call their names, but they are the only two teachers that taught in Anson High School that actually prepared me for what college would be.

MM:

Well, now I feel like you need to tell us those names.

CD:

Well one of them was Mike Brown and the other one was Doris Sprayberry.

MM:

And what did they teach?

CD:

Mike was a math teacher and Mrs. Spray taught senior English. As far as influences, we had a guy named Roy Langerhans came here in the fifties, taught high school civics and coached when my mother was in school here. He coached up through my sophomore year and then retired from coaching, but continued to teach civics and he was my senior civics teacher.



MM:

Okay very good. You did pursue higher education at Texas A&M University, where my son is today, so tell us a little bit about what your major was and what your aspirations were at that time and did you pursue a graduate degree at all?

CD:

I started as an aggie co major and that lasted one semester. I decided I really didn't care what happened if McDonalds put three pickled slices instead of two on a hamburger. I transferred to the Department of Animal Science, was very active in Saddle and Sirloin at A&M. It's their affiliate of National Block and Bridle. I did several committee chairs through my career there. Probably the neatest thing I did was when I was in college was about the time the summer steer fraternities got to be really big in the state of Texas. Former student, Saddle and Sirloin president hatched the idea that it would be really good PR for A&M and the Saddle and Sirloin to host a steer fraternity. The committee was formed and he says, "Oh by the way, I'm leaving to go to Colorado State for graduate work, have at it." So I was chairman of the first two steer fraternities that Texas A&M held, or Saddle and Sirloin held. Of course, we were looking for a neat twist or signature item to kind of make ours special and we did well. We gave—every breed champion received a belt buckle, every brand in reserve received a belt buckle, but the really neat thing we did was we guaranteed a thousand dollars to the overall champion and five hundred to the reserve. Well, what are we going to do with this? Well, we're sitting watching horse races one day and you know how they drag the different blankets of flowers over the horses? We made a blanket out of one dollar bills. We draped a blanket of a thousand one dollar bills taped together on butcher paper over that champion steer and five hundred over the reserve.

MM:

That's impressive.

CD:

It was really neat and the photos of it were neat. And those kids were just thrilled. Now, when they had to take a pair of scissors and start cutting those dollar bills apart, they might not have been as impressed, but it looked good at the time.

MM:

That's great, that's great. Now, we've talked about your education growing up a little bit. I assume that you grew up on a farm, on a ranch.

CD:

Small farm—family farming ranch.

MM:

Okay very good. Now tell me about some of the local—you say that you were in—you were a fireman. Tell me about some of the service groups and extracurricular activities you've been involved in here in Anson or anywhere else where you lived.

CD:

In Anson growing up, my mother's parents Woodrow and Anetta Simmons, he was county sheriff here from '68 through '80 and then worked as DA investigator and kind of an Andy Griffith-type sheriff. I went with him from the time I was in first grade through college years. My grandmother was very big—he and she both were very big on community service. She was one of the original founders of the Anson Business Women's Association Garden Club, worked a long time for the Texaco distributor. When he retired and sold out, she became the Chamber of Commerce manager. So, being in high school, Grandmother managing the chamber, you got lots of opportunities to help with community projects. Forever, the yellow building across the street that we use to dress in now was built in '82. Prior to that, there were a lot of community functions in this ballroom, primarily the Chamber of Commerce banquet. Ag kids were usually the primary source of gathering up tables and chairs at all the churches in town, hauling them down here, setting them up and taking them back. In fact, the first busting I got in high school from the ag teacher involved a little hot rodding incident leaving here to get back to class. We were active, and like I said, 4H, we were active cattle shooting sports the method demonstrations, anything you could do there. Granddaddy had been with the fire department here. I think he was a total thirty-six years, eighteen as chief.

MM:

Okay now this is the same grandfather that was a sheriff as well?

CD:

Yeah, he left the fire department when he went in as sheriff in January of '69. I joined the fire department in October of '79 as a seventeen year old senior in high school. It was something that stays with me today, was very lucky. The hazardous materials training was really coming into its own in the early eighties. Of course, TEEX at A&M runs the fire training field, and I had the best college job a kid could have. I was lucky enough to be hired with TEEX. The training division was early. I had an office in the building on campus. I had a faculty parking sticker, keys, and we ran a class every third or fourth week. It was one of those, "When we have class, you need to be here. When you don't, if you want to instruct with one of your other divisions, turn your time in, do what you need to do to work around your school." It was really good. The worst part of it, second semester my freshman year, my boss came in and said, "Do you have a passport?" "No." He said, "Well, you better get one." I said, "What?" We were actually contracted to go teach a class in Rotterdam. I said, "What, I need a passport." "Well, you're part of the staff, stupid."

You're going with us." It was really exciting till we looked at the calendar and lo and behold it fell on finals week.

MM:

Oh my goodness.

CD:

They said, "Can you set up for a class by yourself?" I said, "Yeah, I think I can." So I finished finals Wednesday and set up for the class and they flew into Houston about six o'clock Monday morning, walked in and here we went with another class. Overall, it's good. Today I'm assistant chief with the Hawley Fire Department. I'm very active in our state fireman's and fire marshall's association. I am a member of the certification board which designs and implements the training curriculum for volunteers. Also, we call it T-flag. It's our legislative committee as well.

MM:

Are you involved in any service organizations? Rotary, Lions, anything like that here in Anson?

CD:

I am a member of the Anson Lion's Club. I resigned last year, I think after nineteen years, eighteen years as president of our county fair association. I have worked as a 4-H leader even after shot. Even after was shot and moved right back in as 4-H leader, coached 4-H livestock judging team for several years, served as fair board director and then as president. I'm still pretty big on helping 4-H and ag.

MM:

Now you were mentioning being shot. Tell me a little bit about that.

CD:

I was a U.S. Border Patrol canine handler stationed in Freer, Texas.

MM:

Now how did you get into that career and for how long did you do it?

CD:

I went in, in '88, was shot in '91. I always thought when I was in college my career was aimed at the meats industry, and the longer I was around it, the more I realized I didn't want to work where the sun didn't shine. I came back, sold real estate. My goal was to get into appraisal work, and about '85 in the oil bust was not good for real estate. '88 Border Patrol was having a major hiring campaign knowing at the end of Reagan there would be a freeze. I was working part-time

for the police department here. I had an opportunity to test and interview and probably as good a job as anyone could have you liked working outside.

MM:

Now tell me about your shooting incident.

CD:

Partner, best friend in the station, other canine handler had accidental discharge. He hit me in the back of the neck. Just one of those, you know.

MM:

Were y'all in the field when it happened?

CD:

No, we was in my house. He had been on vacation, came back early, picked up his dog, came by, got me out of bed. He said, "If you'll set up some searches, I'll tune my dog up and go back to making calls." At the time he and I were providing service not only for the border patrol but for local and state law enforcement in about five counties. I was averaging sixty-five, seventy hour weeks. I thought somebody else taking calls was a really good idea. Like I say, it's just a brief moment of not paying attention.

MM:

So did you retire immediately from the border patrol after the incident or how'd you wind up back in Anson working for the fire department?

CD:

Well, spent—from the end of April—we shot on April twenty-third. I was initially in the hospital in Corpus a week, was flown to Dallas to Baylor Rehab Hospital and we came home the middle of September. Just moved back, I needed some time to be vested in my retirement and one of the neat things—what we call the Old Patrol—I had over 4,400 hours of leave donated to me by other agents to get me over that five year hump.

MM:

That's impressive.

CD:

Of course, at the end of that time I was retired with medical retirement. But it was pretty neat.

MM:

That's something there. Now, you come back here and you're in, as you've already described in fire prevention. You're a fireman and of course up in the system and at the state level as well. You're here in the community. Tell me now since we only have limited time, how did you get involved with the Cowboy Christmas Ball? Your father was telling me earlier that your great uncle used to play way back in the Cowboy Christmas Ball.

CD:

Yes.

MM:

Tell me how you first got involved with this event and your early participation in it.

CD:

Coming with family as a kid, nearly all my life back. Back to the sixties and I think into the seventies, the ball always ended on Christmas Eve. We would have a big family gathering at Christmas and then do our Christmas Eve thing and then come to the ball. That started it. After the ball was changed to the weekend before Christmas, it had just always been a big family deal in our family. We always—family and friends gathered at the house, came to the ball. I was one of the lucky ones. My parents let me go and dance. Quite honestly, we was talking about it earlier, I got to college and I didn't know how to have a date and go to a movie. You had to go to the dance hall. We spent every Saturday night over at Stanford at the Stagecoach Inn. It was a reunion. Our 4-H district covered that part of the state, and there would be kids, you know, drive an hour, hour and a half, and everybody met at Stagecoach. Well, at Christmas Ball time, a lot of that same crowd would come down here. During the time I was in high school was when the no dancing in Anson really took off and got to be the catch phrase and kind of became famous. There was a gentleman here that had a restaurant named Jack Hornsby that would do anything for kids. We had some after football game and Saturday night dances in his restaurant. At the time Ms. Beasley and her husband J. O. were president of the ball and secretary. They let us have some high school dances here. We had some homecoming dances here. Probably one of the infamous highlights was we started Ranch Rodeo with our county fair. Needed a dance to go with that so we went to Mrs. Beasley, "Yes, you can use the building." And that went real well until about the third year, and four drunk cowboys on two horses decided it would be cool to ride their horse in the dance hall, and they did. That kind of put a damper on things, typical had four policeman at the front door for security. "What did you let them do that for?" "Well, we didn't think they was serious." I said, "Good God, drunk cowboys tell you they're going to do something like that, take them at their word." But we had two horses come in the little side door, and they made it to about between that second and third window over there on that side. We caught them and escorted the horses back out and then they got escorted to the county jailhouse,

but it would have been funny had not the potential danger of a horse slipping on a wax floor and kids running around everywhere. We can laugh about it now; it wasn't real funny at the time.

MM:

Sure, sure. Now you've been involved all your life with the Cowboy Christmas Ball or thereabouts. You're on the board here now. Tell me how you view the Cowboy Christmas Ball. Do you believe that the Cowboy Christmas Ball brings not only to Anson, but to the people all over the country and actually from different parts of the world that come here, what do you think that it contributes to them? Why would they come here?

CD:

Well, now I think it's a part of Americana that we're rapidly losing. I probably view the ball differently from the majority of the association members. Having come since '63 or so, you know, the ball to me is just a good dance with a good western swing band. When I was in school, of course, it was cool, it was neat, it was a meeting place, but back then, little country dance halls were pretty common all over Texas. I think with the urban cowboy era and the beginning of the clubs or bars in the bigger towns, quite honestly they've nearly killed off a lot of these old time country dance halls. And I think it's sad. I think a lot of people would have a lot better manners if they'd grown up in the dance hall. You know, people were not real gentle correcting impolite behavior. Now, I see the ball more importantly as preserving a part of Texas history way more so than I did then.

MM:

Are there any specific traditions or cultural teachings that you believe that this ball have perpetuated over time that continues this day and that you'd like to see into the future?

CD:

I think a lot of kids learn how to dance at the ball. Once again, that type of traditional western country type dancing is beginning to be somewhat a lost culture as well. I see the ball as being very instrumental in trying to preserve that. I'm probably least into the pageantry and the reenactment. I still feel the ball should just be a good western swing country dance. The relationship with Murphey, I think, has saved the ball. I think it's been, in honestly, from symbiotic to at least extremely mutually beneficial. I think now the emphasis on the pageantry and all of that one night, I think it's very good, but I think it can also maybe not be as good for the ball overall. I think with Murphy we're beginning to see the "Been there, done that, got the t-shirt effect, market saturation." I think it's incumbent upon the association to try to determine what the next big draw is going to be. We both know all know things are cyclical. I think we're going to have to find another twist, gimmick, new thing to market the ball and market the ball itself if it's going to continue.

MM:

And that leaves me to one of my other questions here. Looking into the future, what do you see the long-term—if you were God today and you could make any imprint on this event that you think would sustain it overtime, what would that be?

CD:

Monte, I'm pretty presumptuous, but not presumptuous enough to play God. From a personal standpoint, as I said, we are going to have to find a way to market the ball that not only appeals to potential attendees and draw a crowd; we're going to have to find a way to market the ball to some financial resources as well. With the current state of the economy, those are not near as easy to find as they are in the middle of an oil boom, but we're going to have to find that niche source of funding that fits—what we do is interested in preserving what we do and what we represent and we're going to have to market the ball on two fronts: someone that shares our interest in preservation of Texas history and something that will draw a crowd and sell tickets. I think it's unique. Murphey night is our big night, and there was quite a debate on raising ticket prices to \$15. In the end of the seventies, when the Stagecoach Inn was going great guns in Stanford, Red Steagall tickets were \$10 then. I think when you look at the cost of entertainment today, I think we're going to have to find something that puts us in that upper echelon of tickets one night. I certainly don't want to see the ball become a high-priced exclusive event that would preclude anyone from attending. I think at two nights, the low prices were for senior citizens that could come and enjoy it, families can come, it's actually quite affordable with \$5 tickets, but I think one night we're going to have to find something that fits in that twenty to forty dollar ticket range. We'll draw a big enough crowd. I think we're going to have to do that for financial preservation on our end.

MM:

So you've described Murphey's connection to this or what you perceive it to be. Do you think that other entertainers should be brought into the mix at some point?

CD:

I think that day is coming. I think that is totally dependent on Murphey. I feel we should honor our agreement with him as long as he wants to keep that agreement intact, but I don't see it lasting forever.

MM:

And what is that agreement?

CD:

As long as he's willing to come, I think we should be willing to accommodate.

MM:

Now, you know, Muddy Creek plays the backup band and then they play on Friday nights. If you had your druthers and you could make things happen and you had the kind of funding that you're looking for to be able to market this in the manner that you might want to market it, who might you think about bringing?

CD:

Red Steagall would be an ideal association. I think there's still quite a few top flight western swing bands. You can start with Jay Cook or you can go to Johnny Bush, Bobby Flores, Darrell McCall, and Jody Nix. There's still quite a few. I don't think they can crack. They can get you to that \$20 ticket, but I think it's going to take a Red Steagall, tell you someone else that would be ideal for this venue based on A: their history playing western swing music and their vast knowledge of cowboy history would be Don Edwards. He used to own the White Elephant Saloon in Fort Worth. Don probably has as great a knowledge of true cowboy history of anyone going and used to have one of the best dance bands around.

MM:

Has anybody in the association or the leadership made any serious approaches to any of these, folks have considered it seriously?

CD:

To my knowledge, no, and I don't think that would be A: feasible or B: wise as long as we have our commitment with Murphey. I don't think trying to upstage him would be—well, it would just be in poor taste in my opinion.

MM:

Now, going back to no dancing in Anson, tell me a little bit about what your perception of the—we won't call it controversy, but the dichotomy that would exist in this community where you don't have as much—you have more participation from people outside the community than you have within the community. What brought that about and in your perception, what makes it continue?

CD:

Ignorance. There was one church in particular that pretty well ruled Anson with an iron fist during the seventies. One of their elders was really intent on seeing no dancing in Anson. I find it not only ironic, but extremely humorous that his son-in-law and grandson provided the music down here for several years. Someone has a sense of humor, but it just grew up—it was, Oh, you can't go down there, a bunch of drunks drinking, this and that. You know, there's never been alcohol allowed in the building. Yes, a big part of the ball was a lot of people went to their car and had a drink during the breaks. That's just kind of part of the history and the culture of the



ball. But once an idea becomes planted, if no one's willing to go verify the veracity of it, and that's how it goes. We were talking about it earlier. Rhonda said she was not allowed to come down here as a teenager. Tommy wasn't allowed to come down here as a teenager, and I feel very lucky that I was not only a teenager, but way earlier than that. When I was in school, we had a lot of the Anson High School kids came down here. Of course, we were going to dances everywhere else, too, but I have taken a final and driven in from College Station to make one night of the ball. The year I tried out for the livestock judging team down there, we had a Saturday morning workout on the last day of the ball. You know, finished it a four o'clock and was home at eight thirty and at the ball by nine. I don't know the answer to getting the ball back to where it is that important to a group of people. You know, the ones that I grew up with that came when we were in high school, the vast majority of them have relocated, just a typical career in life. Maybe they'll retire back here, maybe they won't. I know had my circumstances been different, I would not be back here now. It's just nearly a loss of a generation, and one of the things we're going to have to do is find out how to reach that younger generation and find a way to make the ball mean as much to them as it did to some of mine.

MM:

How do you think that would happen? I mean, what would you do? Have y'all discussed what could be done and what would *you* do try to make that happen, or do you think it just has to happen on its own or it won't happen?

CD:

Back to what I said, we had to find the right niche, the right path for the ball, and I don't think it's going to be anything that happens overnight. Tommy and Cindy's daughter, some of her friends are coming. Greg and Allison's kids are coming, and they're bringing friends, but it's more of the novelty instead of the, Hey, we want to go do this type of deal. How do we reach out to the kids from Stanford, Hamlin, Aspermont, Guthrie, Tuscola, you know. How do you reach high school kids of that age from that far off? How do you draw them to here? I don't know.

MM:

Well, we could go on, we've been going here a little over forty, almost forty-five minutes and this is an excellent interview and your comments are very timely and pointed. Let me ask this, do you feel like to community now as distinguished from the 1970s has changed a little bit, particularly in terms of the perceptions of perhaps some of the former or the current civic leaders, religious leaders in town towards the ball?

CD:

Oh absolutely. I think if that were not the case we would not have Tommy and Cindy as association members. We would not have Greg and Allison as association members. Probably one of the biggest problems or challenges the ball faces is the exact same challenge that 4-H

faces, ag faces. When I was in school, there was outside of school, there was the Little League Baseball System, Pee Wee Little League ball. A few kids played Pony League, that was it. Today, you've got the baseball system, you've got Pop Warner football, you've got Little Dribblers. Girls are playing softball. You have soccer, cross-country, track, volleyball. And as all of these activities both within school and outside of school have come to be, parents are going to do what their kids are involved in, you know that. As long as kids are involved in all these other activities, that creates a major challenge. You know, when I was in school, one basketball tournament during the Christmas break was barely acceptable, but now how many basketball tournaments are there from the time kids get out for Christmas till they go back in January. They have the choice of what? Two or three or four a weekend. Mr. Perot's wonderful school reform that put a cap on absences, all that did was penalize the good kids. You know, that lets water everything down to the lowest common denominator, and I've always been very opposed to that philosophy, probably because of my 4-H and my ag involvement. You know, if we got a kid that can maintain an A average and do all of these other things that used to be done during school hours, they should be allowed to go do it. Their learning is much or more off as they would be in class. I just had a book delivered to me Sunday that was a tribute to Dr. Howard Hesby. Dr. Hesby was a professor at A&M that suffered an untimely death four or five years ago. He was one of these guys that didn't sleep. His philosophy was, "Don't let class attendance interfere with your education." That's not saying that he wasn't supportive of academics, he was. He was very demanding academically, but he spent a week during Christmas vacation taking ag kids on a tour of all the different types of agricultural facilities and avenues in the state of Texas. He spent a week in spring break doing the same thing nationally. You know, I think it's back to that. I think we're beginning to let education get interfere with getting an education. If you don't have the practical knowledge of application and life's experiences, the academics are wasted. I'm certainly not condemning academics, but there has to be a common sense and real world basis on how to apply the academic knowledge. I think we're fighting the school system as much as anything else.

MM:

Well Clay, let's wrap things up here in this wonderful interview. I'm going to give you the opportunity to tell me anything else that you'd like to share about your impressions of the Cowboy Christmas Ball or your life in general that you'd like to share with future generations here and what you think is the essence of the Cowboy Christmas Ball and how it can benefit people now and in the future.

CD:

Well Monte, that's a hard question. I think one of the things that—problems we're seeing in America today is a large part of America has forgotten its roots. I think the core beliefs and values that previous generations, two generations past had, I don't think those are carrying over today. Luckily they're probably strongest in West Texas. We're still basically a ranching and

agricultural economy and a hand shake is still a gentleman's bond. I think the more we can do to remind future generations of their roots, the significance of some of the things that they may not even understand today, I think the better off we will be.

MM:

Very good, well stated. Thank you, Clay.

CD:

Enjoyed it. Thank you, Monte.

MM:

Absolutely, we hope to see you next year at the Cowboy Christmas Ball.

CD:

We will be here.

***End of Recording***

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