Gary Ball: My name is Garry Ball. I was born in Oklahoma, October the 23rd, 1947 to Harold and Thelma Ball. Both my parents were from very large families. My dad was 1 of 13, and my mom was 1 of 12. I turned out to be an only child. I was raised up on a farm in Oklahoma, rural Oklahoma until about the age of 11. At that time, my dad had a work accident that crippled him to the point that he drug his left leg for almost 3 years. Unemployed during that period of time. We were forced to sell the family farm, and move into town at that point in time.

I excelled at school work always. Neither of my parents had high school education. My dad had a third grade education, and my mom dropped out of school when she was in the 11th grade to marry my father at the age of 16, but both of them understood that education was the path to future success, and encouraged/pushed me to do better in school and to get higher education. My dad once told me ... My dad was a bricklayer, and he once told me that he wanted me to learn that pushing a pencil was actually a lot easier and a lot better than pushing a wheelbarrow.

I started working with my dad during vacations and summertime at the age of 11. Very very hard work, but it was the way in which my parents taught me about the value of hard work, and the appreciation that other people saw in you, and the value that they saw in you from the ability to actually work hard. My parents didn't have money, but what they actually gave me was the willingness to work. I always knew I was not the smartest kid in the room, but I knew that I would probably work every kid in that room into the ground just by outworking them.

I graduated in the top 10% of my high school class. Very big school. 646 kids. I never played a day of sports all the time that I was going to school. I never attended a sports activity all the time that I was going to school because I worked after school. As soon as school was out, I went to a job. I worked full time from the time I was able to get a job. I went to a local 2 year school there in Lawton, Oklahoma, for the first two years, just because it was closer to home and it was less expensive. I could make enough money to pay my own way through that. I transferred to Oklahoma State University after 2 years there, just because it was a sister school and I could transfer to it.

I actually started in school in commercial art, which was really an odd path. Probably the best advice that I ever got from a college counselor, after the first year, one of my counselors called me in and he said "Gary, you're really really good at what you like to do. But you don't like to do enough of this stuff to make a living at this. You're going to starve to death if you continue down this path. I've looked at your transcripts. You're really good at math and science. Did you ever consider doing something with that?" And I said "Like what?" And he said "Well, how about engineering?" I said "Oh, well that's a good idea." I went and enrolled in the school engineering, and the rest is history, so to speak.

I got married in 1968 to my high school sweetheart. We had dated for 5 years. I was driving back and forth from Oklahoma State to Lawton, which is a really long drive every weekend. Probably as much of convenience, we decided to get married after my first year there. Immediately upon getting married, we left for Nashville, TN. I got a job with the Southwestern Company, was stationed there in Nashville, TN, selling religious books door to door. I sold in Kirksville, MO. One of 10,000 kids that go out, at the time, every summer and knock on doors and try to sell religious books. 5,000 of those kids are first year kids. I was the number 2 first year kid out of 5,000 people selling books. I averaged selling 1 out of every 3 doors that I knocked on, cold calls, that summer. I made $7,000 in 3 months selling religious books.

At the time, that was more money than both my parents working made in a full year. I managed to make enough money that summer that I paid for the complete rest of my education through school. There was a good side and a bad side of that. Because I was very very successful at doing that, they wanted me to continue to do it. I decided that the next summer, rather than selling books that if I was going to be an engineer, maybe I oughta work as an engineer for a summer and see whether or not I actually like that career path. I told them I wasn't going back out, and at the end of the day I ended up having to get a restraining order against the company in order to get them to leave me alone on campus. Finally they did. That was a very traumatic experience at the time. That summer I worked for the Haliburton Company, out of Duncan, OK. Had a very enjoyable experience working for them. Ultimately determined that the engineering path was something that I really really liked.

After 2 years of marriage, my wife and I decided that we were going to go our separate ways. Looking back on it, I think we grew up and grew apart. I was a certified workaholic at the time. I would go 3 to 4 days in a row without ever going through a normal sleep period. I would work 3 to 4 hours, and then go over and lay down on a couch and close my eyes. Set an alarm for 15, 20 minutes. When the alarm would go off I'd get up, wash my face, maybe I would take a shower, refresh myself and then hit it again. I would do that for 3 and 4 days in a row. Then after that, I would go home and I would crash for 24 hours and sleep. Then get up and repeat the cycle. I found that I was actually at my peak efficiency in doing that. But you noticed in that conversation there was nothing about spending time with a wife or a family, or anything. At the end of the day, she decided that maybe we would go separate ways.

During that period of time, I carried up to 24 hours, 24 credit hours a semester. I didn't start out at that, I started out at 16 and I survived that. I decided "Well, I can add another class." So, I'd add another 2 or 3 credit hours. I built up to where I was carrying 24 credit hours. During that period, I was working 1 full time job. When I was selected for the eclat program, it's a French word that means something associated with excellence, they permitted me to design my own curriculum. They treated me as if I was a graduate student. I dropped back, the most hours they would let me carry was 12 hours a semester. I decided that was way too much free time, and so I added a second job to it. I was carrying 12 hours and working 2 full time jobs during that period of time.

I was extremely productive and extremely happy at doing that, but after 2 years of going through that, I ran my body down to the point that if we were having this conversation and there was a lull in the conversation for 30 seconds, I would go sound asleep. I had the symptoms of meningitis, and actually went to the doctor to get him to tell me that that's probably what I had. At the end of the day what he said was "You're just totally exhausted. If you don't get away from this area, you're going to wind up killing yourself." One of the jobs that I was doing was I worked for Ford Tractor Operations, doing research there at Oklahoma State, in the area of hydraulics. They had offered me a job the year before, and when they offered me the job I said, "Who the hell would ever want to go to work in Detroit?"

When the doctor told me I needed to get away I did 2 things. I called up Ford Tractor and I said "Is the job offer still available?" They said "Yes." I said "All right. I'll be there in 30 days." I had met a young woman who is now my wife. We met, we dated for 5 days. On the fifth day I took her home to meet my parents. On the sixth day, I asked her to marry me and she said "I don't' know. I'll have to think about it." I came back at 6 am on the next morning, and I said "All right. You've had enough time, what's your answer?" And she said "I don't know. How about if I just come live with you?" I said "Nope. I'm not that kind of guy. You either marry me or we'll just call it quits." She said "Ah, what the hell, I guess I'll marry you then." It actually took us longer to find someone that would marry us than it did to decide we wanted to get married.

We finally found a Methodist minister in Stillwater that would agree to marry us after going through a longer counseling period than what we had dated. Knowing one another 30 days, we were married, and that was in 1971, so it was 43+ years ago. Both of us had been married before. Both of us are first born, born in 1947. We were married in the same week previously. We were married to people we had dated for over 5 years. We were divorced in the same week. We ultimately figured out through comparisons that the silver pattern we had in our first marriage was exactly the same. The dinner pattern that we had in our first marriage was the same. The last 4 digits of our parent's phone numbers are the same.

I don't know whether you believe in kismet or fate, or whatever, but I think we were fated to ultimately, to be soul mates and to get married. We married in 1971. We left there and moved to Detroit. The intention was to go to Detroit, work for a year, relax. Get away from school, and then go back and finish getting my PhD. But, after a year ... That was in 1971. I don't know if you remember that period of time, but the economy absolutely totally tanked at the end of that year. The job market was horrible in 1972. My friends who were graduating with the PhDs at that point actually had to lie on their resumes in order to get an interview. If they put down that they had a PhD, they were too overqualified for the job and people wouldn't interview them. So they were putting down Masters degrees on their resume. I talked to my wife and I said "I don't want to teach, so why do I want to go get a degree that when I get through with it I'm going to have to lie and tell people that I don't have it?"

I was having a lot of fun working after some adjustment. I decided to not pursue a PhD in engineering. Going into the workplace was a big adjustment for me. I had continued with my 3, 4 day off a day routine right up until I left school. When you hit a big Ford Motor Company organization, and people showed up at 8 or 9:00 and they left at 5:00. I would look around as people were getting ready to leave the office and say "Where the heck are you going?" They'd say "It's time to go home." I said "The day just got started. Why are you doing this?" They gave me a couple of projects to work on. I remember I'd been there about 30 days and I went in and talked to my boss. I said "You've got to give me something else to do. If you don't, I'm bored senseless, and I won't stay. I will leave." He said "Have I got a deal for you." He opened up his bottom drawer and pulled out a stack of projects about that thick that he didn't know what to do with. He said "Here. Go knock yourself out." I was happier than heck working on all of the things that he couldn't find anybody else to work on.

I had a hard time fitting into Ford's existing culture. If you walked into the engineering office and looked, everybody had buzz haircuts. They wore white shirts, black ties, either a black bow tie or black skinny ties. I didn't own a white shirt. Had no intention of buying one. My hair was down to my shoulders. I didn't have normal dress shoes, I worse cowboy boots, because that's what I wore at school. My bosses bosses boss, who knew me very well from the project work that I was doing ... Every time he would pass me in the hall, I would watch him. He would turn and he would immediately go to my manager's office and talk to him. Roy ultimately told me that John would go in and say "When are you going to get that kid to get a haircut?" They pressured and pressured and pressured. It probably took 5 years before I finally succumbed and got my hair cut.

The guy who was my boss would call me in, set me down, and he would say "Gary, if you're ever going to get anywhere in this organization, you're going to have to change the way you dress." I had told them that I looked through the organization and I figured out that the entry management level in the Ford Motor Company was a salary grade 9. I told Roy, "If you haven't made me a salary grade 9 in 3 years, I will leave and go to another company." Roy counseled me over and over again about having unreasonable expectations, that that career path took minimum of 5 up t 7 years for a good person to be able to progress to that. I said "Well, you've got 3 years."

As it turned out, I made that level in 2 and a half years. 2 years after that, my first supervisor worked for me. The first thing I did, absolutely the first thing I did was I called Tom in. Set him down, and I said "Tom, if you're ever going to get anywhere in this organization, you're going to have to change the way that you dress." We had a very big laugh over that. We turned out to be ... I mean, we were very very good friends. I enjoyed working for him, and he enjoyed working for me. It was, I'll say interesting kismet the way that it worked out.

I tried, during my first 4 or 5 years to get an MBA. I wanted the company to pay for the MBA. They wouldn't do it because the Ford Motor Company policy was you had to be there 10 years before they would pay for you to get an MBA. I told them, "You're going to wait until I ... In 10 years I'm going to have kids. I'm going to be focused on something else. I'm not going to want to get an MBA." As it turned out, that's exactly what happened. 10 years later they approached me and said "We want you to go get an MBA." I said "Well, I don't want to get an MBA." The head of the division called me into his office and set me down and explained to me that I did want to go get an MBA and that I was going to get one. So, I got an MBA. Took 2 years in the program, through Michigan State, so I'm a Michigan State graduate as well. T

The week after I graduated, there was an article that came out in one of the journals. I don't remember which one it is now. The jist of the article was how Harvard MBAs were ruining North America because they were making all these decisions just based on financial information, and not based off of anything associated with products, or the company, or the customers. The guy who had forced me to go through that program, who was an engineer himself by the way, called me into his office and congratulated me on getting the MBA, and told me that he hoped that he hadn't ruined me by forcing me to get an MBA.

By that time, I had one child. I can recall I had been moved from engineering to product planning. In product planning we were working tremendously long hours. I was into work at 6. I would get home at 9, 10:00. Back into work at 6. We worked every Saturday. We worked half a day on Sunday. I had a 3 year old at the time. In order for my son to see me, she would bring him to work and we would go to lunch. I can remember to this day, we had lunch, drove back to work. I got out of the car, and as I was getting out of the car, my son said "Goodbye Dad. See you next week." You could've driven a stake through my heart.

I went into work, and went to my boss who was a young man by the name of Wendell Gottman, who ultimately worked for me. I told Wendell that I would be back in engineering by Monday or I would leave. By Monday morning, they had put me back in the engineering organization where I had a little bit more control over what my activities were than I did at that time.

Ford Tractor bought New Holland in 1988. I, at the time, was the head of the construction equipment side of Ford Tractor operations, engineering manager. What Ford told us was that they were going to put the 2 divisions together to stand it up as a stand alone company, headquartered in New Holland, PA. Grow that company and then ultimately sell shares in it in the New York Stock Exchange. That may have been their intention, but that didn't turn out to be the reality. They convinced us that we should ... There was a selected number of us that went to New Holland, PA, and they closed the tractor engineering offices in Detroit area down in 1988.

In 1991, what actually happened was Ford decided to sell that division to Fiat. Fiat came in and wanted to merge Ford New Holland with Fiat Agra and Fiat Atachi, their 2 ag and construction equipment divisions and stand it alone. It went through a series of names, but the name that ultimately stuck was New Holland, which existed up until about 1996. I was selected by Ricardo [Rigerry 23:02], who was the head of that new division to lead the engineering organization for the company. They wanted me to locate in Italy, in Modina Italy. Don't know if you know where that is, but it's halfway between Bologna and Milan in Northern Italy. I took my family and we went over to check and see. When I say I took my family, my son was 17 at the time. He had just graduated high school and was going to go off to college. Our daughter was 12. She would've been entering the 8th grade at that point.

We looked around all over Northern Italy, and there were no English speaking schools at the time in that general area. The closest that we could find was International School that was in Milan. We looked, and the only way you could figure out how to do it was my family would've had to have lived in Milan. I would've had to have gotten an apartment in Modina, and then go home on weekends. I can remember I went in and set down across from the HR guy, and I told him, I said "You know, this just won't work. This is how we would have to do it." He said "Well, what's wrong with that?' I said "Well, I'm not going to do ... I can't imagine doing it. Nobody in their right mind would do that." He looked at me and he said "Well, every senior manager here in this company is doing that because they all came here from another area of Italy. All their families stayed there and their living in apartments here." I said "Well, I'm not doing that."

I knew if I did, Milan was just close enough that I would've tried to drive back and forth during the week. With the fog that exists there, I could see myself killing myself and somebody else on the highway halfway between Milan and Modina. I told him no. On that trip, we went back through London. Looked around in the London area and then went on home. 30 days later, they called me and they said "Would you consider living in London?" We had found a school in London, the American School of London. We said yes that we would do that.

In 1991, I moved my family to London. We located initially in Baselton, near where one of the plants was. I had an office in Baselton and I had an office in Branford, which is outside of London near the airport, and then I had an office in Modina Italy. My family lived in the London area. As the organization required, I wound up traveling back and forth to Italy every other week for 5 years. I would spend one week in London, one week in Italy, next week in London, the next week in Italy. If there was 5 weeks in a month, we all stayed home. We did that ... All the Italian managers came to London that week, and all the English managers moved to Italy the second week. We did that for 5 years.

It worked, wasn't my idea, but it was really difficult for you. I stayed in the same hotel for 5 years. I never checked in or checked out. They knew me by name. When I would walk in the door, they would give me my key. I didn't leave anything in the room. I took my clothes with me as I wuld leave, but that was my room. I ate at the same restaurant every evening at 7:00, served by the same waiter for 5 years. I got to know him well enough and knew enough Italian that he would try every day to convince me to eat something different, but I ate the same meal every day, every other week for 5 years. It was seafood risotto. Wonderful dish. Absolutely wonderful dish. If I went back there today, I'd eat it again. It was very very good. I guess I'm a creature of habit, once I find something that I like, I stay with it until maybe I would get tired of it. I didn't get tired of that in 5 years.

That period of time was without a doubt, the most difficult work period of my career. I'm not sure if you've had any association with ... I'm not sure if I should say an Italian organization, or I should say a Fiat controlled organization. I don't have enough experience to know how different that they are, but I can tell you that the Fiat organization was one that was ruled by fear and intimidation. Does the term Machiavellian mean something to you? Well, that's the mode of operation.

The gentleman who ran the organization, his name was Ricardo [Rigerry 28:22] He had participated in WWII. He was shot and injured, shot in the head. We were told that he could understand English, and at one point he was fluent in English, but that he could no longer speak English. Never heard him utter a word of English ever, but he did understand what was going on. The language of the company was decided it would be English rather than Italian. I did learn Italian. I was the only American on the senior management board, there were 12 of us that were on the board. Everybody else were Italians. The meetings would start in English, would go on for probably 10 or 15 minutes in English. Someone would ask a question in Italian, and then they would switch immediately to Italian and the rest of the meeting would stay in Italian.

After they figured out that I had learned Italian, could understand what was being said, when the language would switch, it would switch to [Piamontese 29:28] which is a local Turin dialect that all of them understood, that I didn't. I still couldn't understand what was going on. I was referred to as pale face. It was an interesting experience of being on the outside of the culture that is ruling the organization.

Ricardo Rigerry was a human resources person by training in organization. He's written a book, that in that book he states his management philosophy as "Keep your managers cold, tired, hungry, and afraid, and they will perform at their best." If you and I were peers working together, he would do his utmost to make sure that you and I didn't like one another, that we for sure didn't trust one another, because if we did we were less likely to rat the other one out over something that was going on in that side of the organization. That was the organizational climate that I worked in for 5 years. You say "Why did you stay?" I had a 12 to 17 year old daughter, that I could promised that she could spend her high school education in London. She absolutely had the experience of a lifetime going there.

We had been there 30 days and she came home, and she said "Dad, we're going on a field trip." I'm thinking "All right, well they're going to go somewhere in the local English area." I said "Where are you going to go?" She said "It's someplace called Bangkok, Thailand. I think I've got to get shots in order to go." That was the kind of educational experience that she had. She played sports all over the European and Middle Eastern area. We traveled with them to the sports venues where they would play. She'd go to Greece, to Thailand, to Russia, to all over the European continent either on field trips, or on sports activities. She had a absolutely wonderful high school experience. The kids that come out of that school were welcomed at any ... They had their pick of any university in the United States that they wanted to go to. They knew that they were good students. They knew the pedigree of the school, and all they had to do was apply and they would be accepted in the school.

I had promised her that she could finish her education there. January of her senior year, I got a call from ... Another call from Steve Lamb. Steve was the president of Case IH, headquartered in Wisconsin. Steve had tried to hire me 2 or 3 times during the period of time. I just kept telling him "Steve, I can't move. I'd like to, but I just can't do it." January, I called Steve. I said "Steve, would you still like to have me?" He said "What time is it Gary?" I said "It's 1:00." He said "As of 1:00 you are officially an employee of this company."

I left there. I left my family there for 5 months. My wife stayed and my daughter stayed there to finish her graduation. I went to Chicago, and started to work Case IH. My only criteria for Steve was I said "I have had a very horrible work experience for the last 3 or 4 years. I would like to learn your company, but I would like to learn it from the bottom up. I would like the opportunity to work as a low level engineering manager." I said "I want 6 months. After 6 months, you can do with me what you want, but I can work myself into the organization and get to know the people in the organization." He said "That's fine."

They gave me responsibility for the hydraulics for the company. That's theoretically what I was doing. The reality turned out to be something significantly different than that. 30 days after I joined the company, Steve called me in and he said "We would like to consider buying New Holland. I know you have knowledge and information and background associated with it. We would like for you to work with our acquisition team to see whether or not we could make sense out of doing this." So, I spent the next 5 months doing 2 jobs. Doing my hydraulics job, but also working with the acquisition team.

We ultimately put together a proposal that was presented to Angelli, Fiat, for the acquisition of New Holland by Case IH. At the time, Angelli didn't want to get rid of the division and the price that he asked for it was way higher than what Case IH could pay for it. Nothing happened out of that. I went on working, doing my normal thing for a couple of months. Steve called me and he said "Gary, I need your help." I said "Oh, well what do you want me to do?" He said "We've launched .... Six months before I came into the company, they had launched a product into the marketplace. It was tractor loader backhoe's. New generation of products. He said "The launch was an absolute disaster. We are bleeding money like crazy." They make 20,000 of them a year, which for an ag industrial company, that is a very very high volume product.

He said "If we don't get the problems stopped, it will kill the company. I need you to get these problems fixed. I'll give you anything you want, I just need you to get them fixed. Come back and tell me what you need." I went away for a couple of days, then came back and talked to him and said "I need somebody to handle the service and the sales and marketing side of this." He picked a gentleman by the name of Scott Hazlett, and the 2 of us teamed up to lead a project that was aimed at fixing the problems on it. Took us a year to do it. Very intensive work.

Steve put out a letter to the organization. I've never seen a president actually write this to an organization. He said "The company is in crisis. This problem can take this company under. I've asked Gary Ball and Scott Hazlett to fix this. If either one of these 2 gentleman walk into your office and ask you to do something, you pretend that it was me walking into your office, and respond accordingly." It opened every door, every channel. No one ever asked me did I have budget to do anything. Nobody ever asked did I have authorization to do it. If I asked them to do something, they turned the Earth over in order to help us accomplish what we wanted.

In 12 months, we got all of the problems solved. When I say all of the problems, I mean all the problems. We peeled the onion back to the absolute kernel of it. I learned a long time ago from an engineering point of view, that if any problem has stayed around longer than six months with people working on it, it's not a problem. It's multiple problems masking themselves as a problem. Every time people would bring a solution to me, I would send them back to make them peel it back a little bit further and a little bit further, and find the other problems that were hiding in there that really needed to be fixed.

At the end of the day, 12 months after we declared that we had things fixed, at the beginning, those vehicles were experiencing anywhere between 8 and 12 problems per vehicle during their 12 month period of time, which is an absolute disaster in the marketplace. 12 months after that period of time, the repair frequency on the vehicles had dropped to less than 1. I actually learned a very interesting lesson out of that. I had a PhD statistician that worked for me. I had enough products ... You're making 20,000 of them a year, you could put 5,000 samples together of anything and then do comparisons on it to see what you would find.

I always assumed that if I could produce a vehicle that had zero defects, that I would actually have higher customer satisfaction than a vehicle that I produced that had 1 problem. What the answer came back statistically is that wasn't correct. The customer satisfaction for the vehicles that had a problem that was fixed right the first time was actually higher than the customer satisfaction to the vehicle that didn't have a problem in the warranty period. We went and actually asked customers "Why? Why would that be?" The answer was that those customers that had not experienced a problem knew at some point that vehicle was going to have a problem, and they really weren't sure whether or not the dealer and the company was going to be able to fix that problem to their satisfaction.

Those customers who had had a problem and experienced a successful repair the first time knew that the company was going to take care of them. Their overall satisfaction was higher. To me, that was bizarre, but it set a new threshold for me. I knew that if I could get vehicles at that 1, maybe a little bit lower, but now much higher than that, that I had peaked out on the return that I was going to get for my engineering money on these products for trying to fix problems. I needed to work on something else, for instance, helping dealers be able to fix that problem right the first time. Because the customer who had that one problem that wasn't fixed right the first time was not a very happy camper. He expected you to be able to fix it. We turned the organization to work in that area, rather than in the other. It was an interesting time, and a learning experience for me on that.

The work that we did on the acquisition of New Holland didn't really go away. About a year later, Angelli was retired from the head of Fiat. They brought in a guy by the name of Paulo Fresco. I don't know if you remember him. He was from GE. He had not been selected as the top of GE, and so they were able to hire him away to lead Fiat. He brought the GE philosophy in of being number 1 or number 2 in any company that you're in for their products, or if you can't be, then get out of them. If you can't be number 1 or number 2 in the industry, then get out of it. New Holland was, at the time, their most profitable division, but it was clearly number third, and had no expectations and capability of getting to number 1 or number 2 on their own. Deere was number 1, and Case IH was number 2. The people in Fiat pulled out the study that we had done about putting the 2 companies together. They made a pitch to Paulo Fresco, and he said "That's a good idea. Let's do that."

Fiat had had many failed experiences of trying to come into this country. They knew they did not understand Wall Street, and how to deal with Wall Street. They knew that they could maximize their return if this company actually could be listed on the Wall Street Exchange. Paulo Fresco made the proposal to Case management that they would buy, merge the 2 companies, but that the company would be led by the Case IH management, rather than the Fiat/New Holland management. That meant that Steve Lamb and John Peter Risso, who was the chairman of the company were in charge of this new organization. There was only 1 guy in either company that had actually been in both companies, and that was me.

I had worked on the acquisition, and so Steve called me in and said "This is going to happen. We will take care of you. We understand this would not have happened if you hadn't have helped us to make this proposal. We will take care of you. What do you want to do in this new organization?" I said "What do you mean, what do I want to do?" He said, "What job do you want? Do you want to lead the ag side? Do you want to lead the CE side? Do you want ... What do you want to do? I said "Well, I don't want to lead any business unit. I am an engineer. I like leading technical engineering activities, and I want to stay as an engineer. I like the CE side better than I like the ag side. I would prefer to be on the CE side as the head of engineering for the combined company." He said "That's fine. You can have that job. But what I want you to ... You know the people. This is roughly a kind of organizational structure that I want, and I want you to recommend to me who the people are that should be in those jobs." Okay.

I took it a week, filled out all the blanks with the best people from both sides of the organization. Gave it to him. He said "Fine." My number one criteria for the organizational structure was that I made sure that I was not working directly for an Italian. What was really interesting was that about 30 days later, they guy who I had selected to be the head of that organization, he was in Brussels at the time. I got a call and said I needed to fly to Brussels. I flew to Brussels, and went to the hotel where he was staying. I set down with him. He interviewed me for my job. After a 30 minute interview, told me that he agreed that I could have that job. I'm sitting there laughing my butt off because I'm the one that put him in his job, and knew that my job was more secure than his job was. I didn't tell him that, but I had a good laugh over that.

Things went along very well for a year. Then, the personality of the company started to change. If I ask you of all the organizations within a company, engineering, purchasing, manufacturing, human resources, marketing, where do you think the power center is in a Fiat organization? Which of those organizations? Would you guess that its human resources? It actually is human resources. I'll tell you a little antidote, it's back from when I was in New Holland. I was the head of engineering. I went to my site lead in Modina, and I set down with him and I said "Here are the projects that we have to do for the year. Here's the time frame on which we have to do them and the objectives that we have to meet. I need you to tell me what kind of budget that you need in order to accomplish this."

He said "I can't do it." I said "Why not?" He said "Human resources haven't told me how many people that I can have." I said "No, no, no. You don't understand. That's not the way this works. We will figure out the number of people that we need based on the budget that we have in order to do the time schedule and the scale of the job." He says "Nah, that's not the way it works. Human resources will tell me how many people that I can have, and then I will figure out how long it will take me to do the job and how much money that I will spend doing it." I said "Nah, it can't be done that way. You're wrong." He said "You'll see."

About 2 weeks later, as it turned out, he was right. Human resources would determine how many people you could have, what the characteristics of those people were, and then you would have to go try to do your job. I'd never before worked in an organization where it was done that way. I would have an HR person that was assigned to my staff. The reality was, he was there to watch what was going on in my organization and decide whether or not I was doing my job. If he liked the way that I was doing my job. If he didn't he would go up the chain, and pretty soon I would come back down the chain with an issue from somebody.

Steve called me and he said "Gary, I know you've had experience with this. This is what I'm seeing in behavior. It goes totally against Paulo Fresco told us that would occur. Can you explain to me what's going on?" I said "Yeah, I can." I laid out for him what was going to happen over the next coming weeks."Oh no, no. That can't possibly happen. That is totally against what Paulo Fresco promised us." "Okay. You're right, I'm wrong." 30 days later I get called back in. "My gosh, you were right. How did you know that?" I said "Steve, I lived in this for 5 years. I know what the pattern is." "Well, what's going to happen next?" I laid it out for him. "No, that can't possibly happen."

Another 30 days, and I don't get called in my Steve, I get called in by John Peter Rosso and Steve Lamb. They're both sitting in the office. "Steve tells me that you've told him this and this is actually what's happened. What's going to happen next? Oh no, can't possibly happen." Fairly quickly both of them wound up leaving the company. The person that I had worked with in loader backhoe projects, name was Scott Hazlett. At the end of that project, I had such respect for Scott. West Point graduate. Absolutely the best leader I had ever worked for. I told Scott, I said "If you ever decide that you want to do something different, I would like the opportunity to consider doing it with you."

That December, it was announced that Scott was leaving the company. I thought "Well, that's crazy. He didn't contact me to tell me what was going on." January 2nd, he calls me and he said "Gary, I would like to talk to you." "Okay." We met. I'm living in Chicago at the time. He said "I've met 2 young graduates from the Kellogg School MBA Program. They have a really good idea for a business. I'd like for you to listen to it and see what you think." I met with them and Scott said "All right, Gary, what do you think about it?" I said "Scott, is this what you want to do?" He says "Yup. This is what I'm going to do, but what do you think about it?" I said "Scott, if you're in, I'll go with you."

I resigned from Case IH, actually CNH, Case New Holland at the time. Went home and told my wife what I was going to do. I told her, I said "This can be a life changing experience." This was 2000, and the dot com ... It was a dot com thing. The dot com thing was just ... Anything that you could put out there was being successful. There were hundreds of millions of dollars evaluations and companies were being bought and sold. People were making money left and right. I told my wife, I said "This will be a life changing experience for us."

The old adage that timing is everything is right. We started up the company in January of 2000. The bubble burst in April of that year. The company who we had gotten Angel funding from got themselves in big financial trouble, over extending and so they went around pulling back funding from every place that they could. They could take our funding away, so they did. We were cash neutral after 9 months, but we still needed money in order to grow the business. We started looking for other venture capitals. Well, the money that was there wasn't venture capitalists, it was what I called vulture capitalists. It was people were willing to give you money, but they really wanted everything out of the company in order to do it. I kept telling them, I said "Look, I had a job before I came to do this. I can go get another job. If this isn't a way to make good money, then I'm not interested in doing it."

At the end of the day, in January we closed the company down. We closed it down that morning, that afternoon I was picked up by another company that had looked at buying us that was a consortium of construction equipment, ag equipment, and engine manufacturers in the United States and around the world that wanted to put together an industry hub. It was being led by Caterpillar at the time. I went to work on that, worked on that for 6 months. The day we were supposed to go live, Caterpillar pulled out of it. Backed out of it.

During that period of time, I had been interviewing. Was offered a job with Deere, but really didn't want to work for Deere. I had interviewed with Ag Co. When I interviewed with them, it was with John [Shemata 53:29]. You probably never had the chance to meet John. John was the president of the company at the time. Bob Ratliff had moved out to chairman of the board. Interviewed with John. The job that he had available at the time was the head of manufacturing and purchasing. I came in, interviewed for that, because every place that I had ever been prior to Ag Co, I had engineering. I also had manufacturing engineering and the purchasing side of the activities that go for product development. I knew manufacturing and purchasing, I'd just never been the head of manufacturing for a company.

When John interviewed me, he said "I definitely have a job for you, but it's going to take me a couple of months in order for things to ... For my idea to come to fruition. Just bear with me." Caterpillar pulled the plug on a morning. I went home, told my wife that I was unemployed, and she said "You know Gary, this isn't exactly the kind of life changing event that I was thinking about. Being unemployed is not really high on my list of things I would like to see." At 2:00 that afternoon, John [Shemata 54:57] called me. Same day, 2:00 in the afternoon, and offered me the job of head of product development at Ag Co corporation.

It was as close to the dream job that Marilyn and I had ever envisioned because 40 years ago ... Do you know Callaway Gardens? Well, we started going to Callaway Gardens in 1976 when my son was 3 years old. We went to Callaway Gardens every year for 25 straight years. We loved the Georgia Atlanta area so much that we had decided that this was where we wanted to retire to. We actually looked at buying property here in the area to have it, establish it as a retirement place for us when we decided to retire. To have the opportunity to come to work for a company like Ag Co, in my same industry as the head of the engineering organization ... Marilyn had always told me "I don't want to talk about it. If it really comes to fruition then we will talk about it, but not until." At 2:00, John called and offered me the job. I accepted, and I told her "Well, we can start talking about it now."

I reported July 1st, 2001. Came down. During the interview process, it was quite funny. John didn't tell any of the senior leaders what he was planning to do with me. He just had them interview me. Brought me in the first time, then brought me back in a second time, and had me interview with slightly different group of people. The first words out of their mouth would be "What job are you interviewing for?" I would honestly tell them "I don't know what I'm interviewing for, John just told me that he wanted me to talk to you."

One of the interviews that I had was with a gentleman by the name of Dexter [Schiable 57:05]. Dexter was the head of product development at Ag Co. Dexter asked me "Gary, what job are you interviewing for?" I said "I really don't know." Dexter told me later when I walked out of the room, he said "He's here interviewing for my job." It actually was his job. John wanted to move Dexter to Europe to be in a marketing role. As soon as I came in, he moved Dexter to Europe, so I took over the product development side of the organization.

At the time, Ag Co was a $1.8 billion company in 2001. That's not a small company, but the behavior of the company was one of it was a small company. It had been started up by 5 guys. They ran the company just like it was when they started it up as a couple of $100 million corporation. That's not a bad thing. Decisions were made in a very close knit group. There was discussion about them, but once the decision was made, there was nothing but cohesive action that took place from that.

Don't know if you remember the history of the company, but in December of 2001, John [Shemeta 58:26] invited me to travel with him to England right after the 1st of the year to do some activities there. December the 28th, John called me and uninvited me from the trip. Said that he had looked at the agenda and that we wouldn't have time to cover what I needed to cover during that, but that we would schedule one in a couple weeks later and go back again.

January the 5th or 6th, John [Shemeta 59:00], and [Swingle 59:00] and 2 pilots went on the trip. The plane stalled on take off coming out of Birmingham airport, crashed, and killed everybody on board. Really shook my wife up, because I was supposed to be on that plane, and not for a call from John that uninvited me off the plane, I would've gone down with that plane in 2002. Really trying time for the company, because it was so small, you take 2 ... You took the president of the company out, and you took the guy who was world wide head of global sales and marketing out of the company, and it left a really big hole in the company.

Bob Ratliff stepped back in. I had passed Bob in the hall, but I had never met Bob Ratliff. I didn't interview with him in my interview process. Never had a meeting with Bob. It was a very tough time for Bob, for the company, and as it turned out, for me. Bob Ratliff and John Shemeta were like father and son. They had a relationship that was closer than anything that is normal in business. But in that "father son" relationship, not all sons are totally honest with their fathers, and John was no exception. John would manage the information that he would give Bob. Either tell stories in a way that he wanted them to be portrayed, or give him bits and pieces of information about what we were actually doing in the company, especially on my side, on the product side of the organization in order to get Bob to agree with the ultimate strategy that we were going on.

When you took ... And I had no idea, because I was having no meetings with Bob. When you take John out of the organization, Bob comes in. Bob has a meeting with me to talk about my area, and what's going on. Bob has kept notes from all of his conversations that he had with John. What I'm telling Bob is not the same as what John had told Bob. Bob assumes that I'm lying. Clearly, John wouldn't have lied to Bob. If it wasn't for Jim Seaver coming to my aid, and agreeing that he had been in meetings with me and John, or John had told him stuff, Bob would've fired me just because he did not trust me.

That lack of trust didn't just go away. It continued on. When I came into the company, they hired another young man by the name of Brian Truax, to lead the manufacturing and the purchasing side. Brian came out of GE, from GE to Stanley, and Stanley to Ag Co. Bright young man. Had risen very very fast in his career. Had zero wheel base on which to make true judgments on what could and couldn't be done in an organizations. Did not know our products at all. Did not know the organization at all.

One of the projects that we were working on with John was the closure of one of our plants that was is England. We were going to close that plant and move the products. Have of them would go to Bovet, France, and the other half would've gone to Brazil to a plant in Canoas. In order to close the plant and to move them there, we had to make changes to the products to fit those factories. In closing that plant, the company would've saved something like $30 million a year in operating overhead that was associated with it. Bob had been ... I, not knowing, Bob had been pushing John to do it a year earlier. John knew you couldn't do it a year earlier, and had been telling Bob no.

Well you take John out of the equation, Bob comes in and he says "I want to close this plant one year earlier." I told him "You can't do it." I can remember to this day he got as red faced across the table from me as he could possibly be, and explained to me in no uncertain terms that we were going to do it. I told him "All right, you've listened to me. I understood. I've listened to you. I will go get my side of this stuff done, but it's not my side of this that can't be done, it's the purchasing and manufacturing side of this that can't be done with what else is going on in the organization." He brings in Brian Truax. "Brian, I want to close this plant a year earlier. Can you get this done?" "Absolutely. No problems, we can get it done."

Off we go, and we do it. I get my stuff done, and the manufacturing and purchasing side of it is an absolute frigging disaster. Brings the plant to its knees. The Bovet factory has 2,000 uncompleted, unfinished tractors surrounding the plant. You've probably never been to that plant, but it's got a max capacity of about 500 around it, so when you try to put 2,000 there and you're making a hundred and some odd a day, you get into a big disaster really really quickly. Bob fires Brian Truax. Brings me into the board meeting and sets me over in the corner, and listens to him tell the board that he made the worst decision that he'd ever made in his career by listening to the wrong person. Brian was sitting right beside me, and he turned and he looked, and he said "And I listened to that guy, and I should've listened to that guy."

After the meeting was over, he called Brian in, fired Brian. Called me in, and I told him, I said "If you fired him, you need to fire me. We were a team. We didn't get it done. At the end of the day, we didn't get it done." He said "Gary, I remember you telling me that it couldn't be done. I should've listened to you. At the time I didn't know, but I should've listened to you. I want you to stay." At the end of the day, I did stay. It built a level of credibility with Bob over the time frame that lasted for the rest of the time that Bob was involved in the company.

Ag Co's growth strategy at that point was growth by acquisition. We made 28 to 30 acquisitions over the years. I had an engineering budget that was 1.5% of sales, which is totally uncompetitive in the industry. The only thing I could do with the money that we had was to consolidate the products in the platforms that they were, and to consolidate the manufacturing footprint that we had, and to spend money to keep the products legal to meet emissions requirements that was going along. To be a "slow follower" in the industry for products. If Deere came out with something new, we would try to have that product in 1.5 to 2 years to have the same kind of thing. If you're growing by acquisition, you can get away with that kind of strategy.

We bought Vultra. Vultra was a $600 million Euro acquisition, which at the time was almost $1 billion. That acquisition gave us a footprint that was so big in tractors, that there was almost nothing else that we could buy that the justice departments would approve. Bob knew that that kind of growth strategy was not going to be able to continue. Bob is absolutely a financial genius. He is the best let's make a deal guy I've ever worked for. If you're wanting to take a company and try to grow it by acquisition, he's your man. But if you're going to try to grow a company organically where you have to refresh your products and grow your organization, and be able to build a developing organization, that's not really Bob's forte. Bob understood that, and Bob led the board in identifying and selecting Martin [Rickenhogen 01:08:28] to come into the company and to take over Ag Co as the president CEO of the company. Bob stayed on as chairman for a little while, they overlapped for about a year.

The strategy that the company embarked on at that time was one of organic growth. You had to build the products, build the organization, and to grow it. Martin was very open with me when he came in that he had been advised by outside people in the industry that he would need to replace me. That I was okay as a leader for one of a consolidation period, but that I didn't have what it took to run a growth organization. Martin set me down and told me, but he said "You have the opportunity to prove that they're wrong." We worked very very closely together for a period of time. I had told Martin that there was a definite maximum growth rate that we could do in the engineering organization. The most that I wanted to try to grow the engineering budget year over year was about 15 to 20%. That anything up to that, I was comfortable that we could spend the money efficiently and effectively. If we tried to spend at a greater rate than that, I knew that there would be significant amounts of things that we would waste, either in engineering effort, or projects that we would wind up throwing away.

My job was to identify to Martin what I needed. Martin's job with the board was to help me sell the ideas that we would sell to the board, and to go about doing it. Luckily one of the acquisitions that we had made along the path was Fendt. Fendt is a German tractor company, located in the Bavarian region. [inaudible 01:10:42] specifically the town. Fendt was without the doubt our industry's leading technology provider bar none. John Deere would love to be able to have products that could match Fendt in technology but they can't and they never will. Fendt has the knowledge, Fendt had the processes, they had the "capability". All the needed was the money and the support to help them to actually fulfil the ideas that they knew how to do. My job was to get them the money and to "stay out of their way". To let them go do their thing.

My second job was to take the technology that was being developed there and to figure out the most cost effective ways in our other brands to be able to take that technology or to take those components and to use that technology and components in the other products. Not just tractors, but also in harvesting machines and other products that we had around the world. That kind of activity is not a sprint. It's not something that you can go do and accomplish in a one year, two year period of time. It's very definitely a journey. It becomes a ... Not just an engineering activity, it becomes a company activity.

When you take a company that has been small and has had its products primarily developed by the engineering organization with a little interplay from the other groups, to try to get that company to understand what their role really is in a global product development company, is really a big challenge. Helping them to understand that and then getting them to actually do it is really where the challenge is. It became a process of educating the whole company into the process, rather than just the engineering.

The secret to AGCO's success is really that it was a big company that behaved like it was a small company. One of the best practices that Bob Ratliff had started was the key management team was all located in Duluth. Every day at lunch time, every senior leader that was in the office for that day would get together, including Bob, and we would go have lunch together. During those lunches, work would be carried out on a very informal basis, but more importantly than the work that got done, it was a time of communicating, learning about your colleagues that you were working with, and developing friendships and relationships with those people. Bob developed the most cohesive group of people as a company leadership team that I had ever seen. You didn't see the backbiting, infighting, maneuvering that goes on in big companies about "I'm going to try to make myself look good by making you not look so good so that I can be the favored one and be in line to take over for the company." It just didn't exist.

When Martin [Rickenhogen 01:15:10] came in, Martin's a very astute guy. Martin recognized fairly quickly what was at play here, but also understood that while we had a culture in the Duluth office amongst that management team, it didn't really extend outside of that office and outside of that team. Martin set about trying to make sure that he built that team up, and to expand the team to include the "management leadership team of the global organization". We became a teaching and learning organization. The senior leaders of the company became the teachers of it. He actually wrote an organizational management document, I mean, Martin wrote it personally. We published it, and we taught it.

One of the most joyous things that I've had the opportunity to do as a manager in a company is to actually stand in front of a group of 20 to 30 multi cultural people from all over the world and teach them about the management philosophy of the organization, of AGCO, and use work experiences that you've had in order to give them teaching lessons about what it is. It's absolutely a joyous thing to do, and it's something that absolutely would not have happened without Martin's participation in doing it. Wonderful, wonderful experience to do.

In the beginning, I had an engineering budget of about $50 million, and about 6 sites. When I retired, my budget was approaching $400 million, was about 2.5 to 3% of sales, which is very competitive in our industry, but I had 17 sites, which meant that I had 17 direct reports spread out literally all over the world. You couldn't name a continent that I ... Well, Australia, I didn't have a place in Australia. I didn't get from 6 sites to 17 sites overnight. I grew into it by, you make an acquisition and you wind up with a development center that you have. You acquire another one and you have another one. It was an incremental process of stretching yourself flatter and flatter and flatter. We were by far, the flattest product development organization that existed on the plant. I mean, between me, the head of engineering, and the guy who was on the CAD tube that was actually designing the products that we were doing, was three levels. Site leader, his guy, and that guy.

With that kind of flat structure, it made it very very easy for me to keep my finger on the pulse of what was going on in the company. I became a professional traveler. I would be gone 50 to 75% of the time. That's not a glamorous thing. People would say "Well, where do you go?" "I go to Bovet, France which is outside of Paris." "Oh, you get to go to Paris?" "Well, no actually I don't get to go to Paris. I go to Charles Degault, and I arrive in Charles Degault after having slept the night on the plane, go to work. I work that day. Work the next day, and I work the next day, and I'll catch a plane and head back to someplace else that I would go."

You learn to manage your time by sleeping on the planes, and hitting the ground and working very very long hours while you are there. I would have people that would say "Gary, we don't get to see you very often. You've been here what, once this year?" I'd say "Look, you really don't want to see me very often because I go where there's problems. If you're seeing me very often, it means you're having a lot of problems that you can't handle. If you can't handle your problems, and I'm having to come here and help you handle your problems, you probably won't be seeing me very long." "Oh, okay. Enjoy working with you, don't want to see you very often."

I selected people specifically as site leaders that were independent, self starters, could manage their activities without my involvement. I only got involved when there were problems at that site that were beyond what the local team had either the capability to do or the resources to do it. Oftentimes, they didn't have knowledge of what resources and capabilities that we had at some of the other sites. I would go in to understand what was going on and either provide them help myself, or to pull someone out of another site to put in there for a short period of time to give them knowledge and help in being able to do it.

When we hired my replacement after a very long and exhaustive search to find someone, we started trying to find someone that was inside our industry. The ag equipment industry is a fairly small network. There are some very good people that are in them. But, typically the people that work in their companies like their companies. It becomes very difficult to find someone that has the right kinds of things about them that isn't also very well appreciated and being taken care of by their own company. We were unsuccessful at prying anybody out of any of our competitors. We had developed an internal replacement, but the timing was horrible for him. His wife's mother has Alzheimer's. They live in a small little area of [Marctoberdorf 01:21:59] Germany. They really couldn't do the job from [Marctoberdorf 01:22:04], it would need to be in either our European headquarters, or in Duluth. Would've required a lot of travel for him as well, and he said "Gary, at this time I can't do it to my family."

We tried for a year to find a way that he could do it, because he really was the right person for the job, but at the end of the day, he declined and so we went on the outside. We hired a gentleman by the name of Helmut Andress. He had background out of Navistar, and background out of the European automotive companies. Background in engine development. He was a very good, very good fit. Another German, but a German that fit very well with where we wanted to go with the company. When Helmut came in and looked at the way I was organized, he said "This is crazy. It's not possible for anybody to do this." I said "Well, Helmut, I've been doing it for 8 9 years. It is possible to do it." He said "It's not possible for me to do it." I said "Okay." He reorganized his own engineering organization in order to take the product expertise that we had in the company and put them in a place that they could control the product side of what was going on, and he could work more on the organization, the people, and the budget, and that kind of engineering management side of the business.

I had many opportunities in my career to move out of the engineering organization. I could've done that at AGCO, but when we lost our leadership there and later on, when Martin came in, I was asked if I wanted to be considered for the leadership jobs at AGCO. I was very forthright with them. I said "If you ask me to do it, I will do it. But if you ask me what I would like to do, I would prefer to do what I'm doing in a technical role. I think I am far more valuable to the company in that role, then I would be in a senior leadership role for the business. There is ... It's too easy for you to find other people that have those characteristics. Much easier to find that, then it would be to find somebody to do the technical side." I had the same opportunities in Ford Motor Company, it just wasn't something that I really was interested to do.

Engineering was a very good educational path for me, but I can honestly say that I probably didn't use even 10% of the technical knowledge that I learned in engineering school in doing my job as an engineer, as an engineering supervisor, manager, and engineering leader. What I did learn that I did use was an organized approach to solving problems. You use that over and over and over again. It's really such a shame that there's not an easier path to gaining that knowledge for more people, than having to slog through engineering school in order to do it. The world could do with more people that thought logically in how to go about solving problems, than what we have today. Hopefully somebody will address that as they go forward.

If you look at my entire educational career, the single thing that I learned that helped me through my career more than absolutely anything else was I took public speaking, speech and debate and drama when I was in high school. I took it from the time I was in the eighth grade through the twelfth grade. I told you I didn't participate in sports, but I did participate in speech and drama. I was the only student in the history of the high school that received degrees of distinction, which is the top level of degree that you can get in both thespians, which is stage production, and in speech and debate. I liked speech and debate. I liked public speaking. I liked impromptu speaking. I did very well in that area in competitive arenas.

I have always tried to impress on young people that when they have the opportunity to learn how to stand in front of a group of people, whether it be small or large, and to express themselves so that they can communicate with other people, that they need to take advantage of those opportunities because there is absolutely nothing more valuable than being able to do that. You could be the absolute best engineer in the world, and if you can't find a way to communicate your ideas, your brilliant ideas to those around, they have limited value to anyone other than yourself, especially in organizations in corporate America. Being able to speak and express your ideas clear and succinctly is really a talent that will take you further than almost anything that you can do.

I retired from AGCO 2 years ago. I've absolutely enjoyed every minute of it. I retired for really 2 reasons. The number one reason was if you would've asked me even 3 to 5 years ago, did all the travel that I do, did it bother you? The answer was no, it didn't. My body didn't know anything other than being screwed up from all the time zone change that I put it through all the time. There was a period of time when we had the plant disaster in Bovet, that when Martin fired Brian Truax, I was the only senior leader left in the company that could even spell manufacturing or purchasing. I was asked by Bob to go straighten it out.

I spent 7 months at that plant fixing it. I flew back and forth from Atlanta to Paris every week for 7 months. I would fly out on Sunday. I would fly back in on Friday. I did that every week except 2 weeks for 7 months. The first week was Christmas, and the second week was when my wife came over and spent a weekend with me, a long weekend. When I came back in on that Friday, she was still trying to recover from the jet lag of her trip over. She said "How in the hell are you doing this? I am still so messed up, and I can't imagine what your body is going through." I said "I just don't know any better."

During that period of time, when I would travel to the Atlanta airport and walk up to the counter, the people behind the counter without me showing any identification would say "Good evening Mr. Ball. How are you today? Are you heading off to the same place?" I would say "Yes. I am." Give them my documentation and they would check me in. I could walk up to the check in desk and Paris and do exactly the same thing. I knew the people on the airplanes, because they had become very repetitive. I knew the people behind the desk because they were very repetitive. They obviously knew me. I can tell you with absolute honesty I don't miss the travel. People ask me "In your retirement, where are you going to go? Are you going to travel?" I don't want to go anyplace. I'm still not over all of the travel that I did previously.

The second reason that I retired is that I have 2 grandsons that live in this area. They live about 10 to 15 minutes away from me. One's 6, and the other one's 3. They will only be this age one time. I was not going to miss that opportunity. I truly appreciate the opportunity that Bob and Martin gave me with working with AGCO. It was clearly the best company that I ever had the chance to work for. It was really and truly a jewel experience.

Martin requested that I continue to work for the company for the first year, and I did on a part time basis. I consulted on a project that was going that I had started. It was the largest project that the company had ever done, and I stayed with it until they had the first launch of that product, which took place a year after I retired. It became apparent to me that they didn't need me. It also was very apparent to me that I didn't need them. I've stayed in contact with my friends because I miss the people. I don't miss the work at all. I've turned down multiple opportunities to consult and to work. There might be a time in the future that I would get bored and consider doing it, but the thought hasn't entered my mind to do it.

I'm an avid golfer. I play to a 4.8 index handicap, which is not bad for an old retired fart. My game has gotten significantly better when I've had the opportunity to work on it, and I have cleared the cob webs from time travel out of my head. I bought 106 acres of land in Dawson County. I bought it 3 years ago, just as I was retiring. I bought it with the express purpose of I like to hunt and fish. I don't like going on other people's land. I don't like going on public land, because I hunt with bows or shotguns rather than rifles, and other people hunt with rifles. They shoot a long way. I want to be able to teach my 6 year old and 3 year old grandson to hunt and fish.

I've built a fishing pond on the property. I've stocked it with fish. We stocked it a year ago, and in one year the catfish have gone from 5 inches to long, to over 18 inches long. From a few ounces to 2.5 pounds. The striped bass that we put in have gone from 2 inches long to over 18 inches long in 1 year. I feed them 3 times a day, so they are very well cared for and very well fed. I have all kinds of turkey and deer on the place. I have a tractor. I have farm equipment that I can use to piddle around. I'm up there playing at least once a week, sometimes twice a week.

I'm into genealogy, and have been for a long long time. I have 21,000 relatives in my database. I can trace my lineage back in this country to 1640s. The extended families that go out from that ... Nothing goes back further than that, but I've been working to fill out the tree for a long time. I spend probably an hour a day working on that. I've set aside the space and the equipment to get back into my artwork. I am an artist but I have a fairly narrow focus on what I like to do. I like to do portraits. I like to do charcoal, pen and ink. Do you know stippling? Stippling is making pictures with dots. I like stippling, I like stippling a lot. I like pastels. I would love to be able to paint either watercolor or oil, but I've never had the patience to do it. My daughter is a good painter, but it's just not in my nature to have the patience to do it.

I was a potterer for 15 years. Made my own wheel, and did all kinds of ceramic pottery, typically utilitarian stuff. I was a glass blower for 2 years. One of the jobs that I had when I was at school for 2 years, was I blew glass. Worked to repair chemistry lab glass. I've done leaded glass for a while. I quit blowing glass because my parents hated me doing it, because it is an actual very dangerous thing to do. I would heat up a piece of glass and lay it down, and while you're heating it up it glows. It shows that it's hot. But before the heat goes away, the color goes away. I would reach over and pick back up again. That heat is transferred from that end down to this end, and I would pick it up and burn my fingers. I decided that that was a craft path that I really shouldn't be doing.

I don't lack for anything to do. I spend at least one day with my grandkids. They were at the house yesterday. We built a swimming pool in the backyard, and we built it just as something that the kids would like to be around. I've got four wheelers that we ride around on. I bought a single shot bolt action 22 that I'm teaching the 6 year old to shoot. I am blown away by how good of hand eye coordination that he has at such a remarkable young age. I started ... I was given my first gun before I was 5 years old.

I was raised up with horses, but I didn't get a bicycle until I was in college, because my parents thought that bicycles were dangerous. Guns were not. I was taught how to use a gun. They knew I wasn't going to shoot anybody else. I wasn't going to shoot myself, so guns were fine, bicycles were dangerous. When you're an only child, you have a very interesting upbringing when you're from Oklahoma.