

Baylor University Institute for Oral History

Interview Abstract

Interviewee(s):	Fred C. Bryant
Interviewer(s):	Stephen M. Sloan
Collection:	Special
Project:	Making It Work: The Life and Legacy of Robert East
Interview #:	1
Interview date:	May 26, 2022
Interview location:	remote interview recorded in Waco, Texas
Recording medium; duration:	video conference interview—Zoom; 1.80 hr.

Abstract

Fred C. Bryant was the retired executive director [1996–2016] of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute [CKWRI] and served as an advisor to the East Foundation for nearly a decade; growing up near San Antonio, his grandfather’s love of horses and hunting, attending high school |00:00:59|; attending Texas Tech University |00:02:18|; limited involvement with FFA in high school |00:03:41|; bottle feeding orphaned Angora goats for his grandfather |00:04:08|; developing love of hunting from his grandfather, seeing no conflict between hunting and conservation |00:05:29|; knowing in high school he wanted a career in the outdoors, majoring in wildlife management at Texas Tech |00:07:17|; why he chose an academic path |00:09:35|; his strong belief in doing applied research |00:10:45|; applying to master’s programs, getting into wildlife biology program at Utah State University |00:13:15|; studying wild turkey population north of Zion National Park |00:16:19|; working for rancher in exchange for horse |00:18:13|; takeaways from his research in Utah |00:19:23|; professor at Utah State recommending him for PhD program at Texas A&M University |00:21:03|; his interest in intersection of range and wildlife management |00:22:42|; working at Sonora Experiment Station as a doctoral student at A&M |00:23:45|; his PhD dissertation research regarding white-tailed deer |00:26:03|; applying for academic positions after earning PhD |00:28:45|; accepting a professorship at Texas Tech |00:30:55|; participating in animal management grant through Texas Tech, building experiment station in Peru, Texas Tech pulling out of Peru due to terrorist attacks |00:32:44|; research and teaching at Texas Tech |00:38:55|; taking students on field trip to Vermejo Park Ranch |00:40:32|; how he came to be director at CKWRI |00:41:40|; changing the culture at CKWRI |00:46:01|; potential he saw in CKWRI |00:46:50|; research CKWRI was doing when he took job |00:48:29|; campaign to raise awareness of CKWRI’s work |00:48:57|; position as assistant vice provost of research at Texas Tech |00:50:08|; quail research at CKWRI |00:51:21|; getting to know South Texas ranchers |00:53:49|; new landowners’ concerns about broader ecosystem |00:57:10|; putting ten-year studies into place at CKWRI |00:58:54|; Robert East’s management style |01:02:30|; meeting Robert at anniversary celebration of King Ranch |01:03:40|; funny story he heard about Robert |01:04:16|; more on meeting Robert at

anniversary celebration of King Ranch |01:05:50|; attending Robert's funeral |01:08:01|; Caesar Kleberg's influence on Robert |01:11:56|; Ron Davidson asking him to serve as advisor to East Foundation Board of Trustees, advisors butting heads with trustees |01:15:26|; early recommendations that advisors made to trustees, more on advisors butting heads with trustees |01:19:57|; Bryan Wagner joining East Foundation Board of Directors |01:25:51|; hiring of Neal Wilkins as president and CEO of East Foundation |01:30:23|; serving on East Foundation's Professional Advisors Group under Wilkins |01:32:00|; blend of wildlife and range management in East Foundation's mission |01:33:00|; Behind the Gates educational program |01:36:33|; thoughts on increasing specialization in academia |01:38:01|; reflecting upon his career and friendships |01:41:48|; his relocation plans |01:44:08|; borrowing an outhouse during his master's program |01:44:41|; wrapping up interview |01:46:42|.