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Ag Econ Alumnus Wins Rhodes Scholarship



Vincent Hofer, recently selected Rhodes Scholar, will soon join the ranks of former President Bill Clinton and Former U.S. Poet Laureate Robert Penn Warren. Hofer, '08, K-State's eighth Rhodes Scholar winner since 1986 and Ag Econ's second, knows being named a Rhodes Scholar is a life-changing event.

"Being selected as a Rhodes Scholar is an unbelievable opportunity, as well as an incredible challenge. Minutes after the announcement that I was selected, the committee challenged me to 'go out and make a difference in the world.' U.S. Senators, world-renowned researchers, composers, CEOs of major corporations, a President of the United States and many more fall in the pile of Rhodes Scholars, so I'll join a network of individuals who have accomplished amazing things throughout their lives," Hofer said.

James Hohenbary, assistant dean for nationally competitive scholarships, is convinced Vincent will make excellent use of this opportunity.

"The Rhodes will give Vincent the chance to pursue Latin American studies and Development Studies at Oxford University, one of the top universities in the world,"
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Distinguished Alumnus Shares Ideas for Success

The Department of Agricultural Economics was pleased to award the 2008 Distinguished Alumnus award to Steve Irsik at a banquet November 21, 2008.

No stranger to success, he is General Partner of Irsik Equities, L.P., a family owned agricultural business with headquarters near Garden City, Kansas. Irsik Equities involves significant interests in farming, a native grass ranch, commercial Angus cows, dairy, commercial cattle feeding, feed milling, and further processing. Steve is an entrepreneur who has vertically integrated the cattle and grain segments of the business.

During his acceptance speech, Irsik outlined several areas he views to be crucial as students position themselves for future success.

First, the time spent pursuing a degree is not just seeking a diploma. He encouraged students to expand their minds and broaden their perspectives. Irsik also believes that a bachelor's degree is not enough for the competitive market. He sees a masters degree as the new bachelors in the future.

Second, Irsik states networking is a key to future opportunities. Time spent getting to know a faculty advisor and those who provide scholarships is important. Their experiences and current positions are a great asset as students begin a career.

Love and embrace change. As we've seen in the past few months with the economy, change can happen at any time. Those who anticipate and enjoy change will find themselves in less difficult circumstances. Irsik believes as time goes on change will be more abrupt and accelerate, so dealing well with change will be a competitive advantage.

Fourth, acquire a vision. Spend time dreaming about future options. Then, take the next step. Develop a vision for how to accomplish your dreams and pursue them.

Finally, be brave. Success comes from being the first out of the box, but it takes guts to take the first step. Failures will come, but success can be achieved by building on what you know and taking risks.

Former Rhodes Scholar Winner Shares Lessons Learned

As a Rhodes Scholar himself, Kelly Welch knows the journey ahead of Vincent is one he will recall with great fondness.

“Those first few weeks after the winners are announced are tremendous. But after all the euphoria and the accolades have subsided, when he realizes he has to wait for the adventure to start, that’s when I’d like to talk with him,” Welch shared.

Speaking with wisdom from experience, Welch alludes to a special bond all Rhodes Scholars share as he passes on his well-wishes to Vincent.

Much like Vincent, Welch was an active leader and excellent student during his tenure at K-State. His faculty advisors, Dr. Bryan Schurle and then Associate Dean, Dr. David Mugler, encouraged him to apply for nationwide scholarships.

“I spent a lot of time in Dr. Mugler’s office, and between him and Dr. Schurle they convinced me to try for some of the scholarships available. The Rhodes was one I had never even heard of. I applied for the Truman my sophomore year and didn’t win. Then I applied for the Marshall and Rhodes at the same time. There are so many talented individuals out there, and there is a lot of chance in it. I know the competition is so much more fierce now. I’m so thankful that I didn’t have to compete with Vincent,” he added.

As a former Rhodes Scholar, Welch has been asked to serve on several selection committees. As someone reviewing the applicants, Welch shares they look for individuals who are willing to “fight the world’s fight”.

“There are innumerable ways to fight the fight, but it’s in the way an individual chooses to fight the fight, to share his or her passion that distinguishes the applicants. It encompasses intellectual ability and demonstrated force of character exemplified in what they do. Many take that to mean pursuing politics, but you can pursue this in so many different areas,” he said.

Of his own time at Oxford, Welch remembers plenty of opportunities for growth and personal development.

“Oxford is a different world. There’s no way to predict it, and I

wasn’t ready for it. It was a lot of fun. The history, tradition and a strongly different culture took awhile to learn to love, but I made enduring friendships that have followed me through life,” he said.

Welch recalls arriving on campus and quickly learning of a stark contrast between the culture in England and that of the Midwest.

“I walked up to some peers and introduced myself. I remember being greeted by cold, blank stares. It wasn’t until later that I learned in England you are introduced to people by others, not yourself. Vincent will learn to love this part of the culture, so different from our own, just as I did,” Welch said.

There to pursue graduate studies, Welch chose to study philosophy, politics, and economics.

“At K-State, I fell in love with agricultural economics and later macroeconomics. Because I was a double major, most of my time was focused on these two subjects. When I got to Oxford I wanted to expand beyond what I had traditionally pursued,” he explained.

After returning from Oxford in 1989, Welch took a job as a management consultant in Washington, D.C., then moved to the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City. Soon thereafter he decided to pursue his Ph.D. in Finance at the University of Chicago, then served on the faculty at K-State and USC. He now calls the University of Kansas his home.

“The exposure to different cultures was a broadening experience I was eager for. But, I knew I wanted to return to Kansas and I was fortunate the opportunities came along to do so.”

For Vincent, just starting his journey, Welch advises him to be excited for it.

“Enjoy it, the time one has for such opportunities is limited. I’m not one who wishes I was back there now, but I do cherish the memories. Now, all Vincent has to do is figure out how to fill the time between now and September when the real adventure begins.”



Dr. Kelly Welch, Rhodes Scholar in 1986, currently serves on the Finance faculty at the University of Kansas.

Faculty/Alumni Updates

Bill Casey, '89 & '91. Keokuk, Iowa. caseybeef@msn.com. Wife- Kristine and Daughter – Chole is 9 years old. Owner/operator of 1000 head stocker and 80 Bred cow cattle operation Casey beef.

Dr. Sean Fox is taking Sabbatical Leave from January 2009 – May 2009. His objectives include research on various aspects of agricultural production and marketing in Hawaii as well as examining potential benefits of island status in terms of avoiding international phyto-sanitary trade restrictions associated with mainland disease outbreaks, and current and potential future use of food irradiation for Hawaiian agricultural exports. He will be hosted by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Management at the University of Hawaii, Manoa.

Dr. Arlo Biere, was awarded the Dave Mugler Teaching Award, Professor 2008. Biere was part of a team that constructed the basis for current curriculum in 1972 and has led the department’s undergraduate program since 1987.

Dr. Robert Burton, was awarded the Gamma Sigma Delta Outstanding Teaching Award, Professor 2008

Dr. John Crespi has accepted the position of Graduate Coordinator.

Dr. Rodney Jones has resigned his full professor appointment to accept a position of North West Oklahoma Area Agricultural Economist working for OSU Extension in Enid, Oklahoma.



Allen Featherstone laughs as Barry Flinchbaugh shares an opinion with Vincent Hofer at the K-State luncheon in honor of his scholarship win. Photo: David Mayes

said Hohenbary. “Not only was Vincent an outstanding student and leader in his career at K-State, he has a great work ethic, intense intellectual curiosity, and a deep concern for the welfare of others. I am thrilled to see him recognized in this way.”

Hofer approaches his time at Oxford with great expectation, but without a sense of naiveté.

“I’ve already had a chance to meet with several former Rhodes Scholars over the past few weeks and heard some amazing stories of their time at England. Oxford is an epicenter of intellectual thought on a wide range of topics, and I really look forward to meeting individuals with similar interests and career ambitions. Nevertheless, from traveling and living abroad before, I realize there will be a cultural-transition period that will prove testing, but I look forward to the challenges and obstacles that await me,” he said.

During these next few months, Hofer will continue to work for U.S. Senator Sam Brownback in Washington, D.C., as a legislative correspondent. After completing graduate studies at Oxford, Hofer plans to pursue a career in international development.

When asked why he believes he was selected, Vincent humbly admits he’ll never know for certain, but understands the competition was tough.

“The pool selected for interviews at the district level is always top-notch, and I honestly didn’t feel I stood much of a chance after hearing some of the other candidates’ stories and accomplishments. However, I do know the guidance and advice I received from K-State faculty and staff during my college tenure, and the weeks leading up to the interview, set me up for success in the competition. My unique degree (international agribusiness), studies abroad, internships, and leadership experiences were items the committee found particularly interesting and fitting for Oxford,” he said.

2009

Vincent Hofer, agribusiness, Franklin
2003

Ben Champion, chemistry, Olathe

1998

Jonathan Winkler, math, physics, and English, Wichita

1991

Kristy Parker, history, Valley Center

1990

Mary E. Hale, history and speech, Topeka

Janelle B. Larson, animal sciences and industry and social sciences, Hiawatha

1987

Kelly Welch, agricultural economics and economics, Moran

1986

Virgil Wiebe, political science, geography, and pre-law, Garden City

1979

Ann K. Jorns, foods and nutrition science, pre-med, Manhattan

1978

Elaine C. Hefty, microbiology, Valley Falls

1974

Roger D. Sorrell, anthropology and history, Garden City

1937

Horton M. Laude, agronomy, Manhattan

1928

Paul E. Pfuetze, general sciences, Manhattan

K-State Ag Econ Professor Recognized as One of the Best



Michael Boland, a professor of agricultural economics at Kansas State University, is a 2008 regional winner in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Awards Program for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences.

The awards program recognizes a select group of college and university teachers who excel at teaching, make a positive impact on student learning, and influence other teachers by example. The program also seeks to focus national attention on the teaching role as fundamental to the development of the

scientific and professional expertise essential to the future growth and progress of the nation's food and agricultural system.

Two national winners of the honor were selected, while Boland was one of six regional winners.

A K-State faculty member since 1996, Boland specializes in agribusiness management and teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in agribusiness strategy and an international agribusiness course in conjunction with a study tour.

Boland has been recognized for his teaching nationally, by the university and by his college. His honors include serving as co-chair in 2003-04 of the National Food and Agribusiness Management Education Commission, which was created by the Department of Agriculture to conduct a national study on undergraduate and graduate agribusiness programs and recommend future curriculum areas. He is now serving as chair of the International Agribusiness Task Force, which has been funded by the Department of Agriculture to analyze ways of integrating international competitiveness in undergraduate programs.

Boland was named K-State's 2005-2006 Coffman Chair for University Distinguished Teaching Scholars; received the David J. Mugler Outstanding Teaching Award from the K-State College of Agriculture in 2003; and was the recipient of a K-State Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in 2001.

He has taught or lectured in more than 30 countries across the world and has led five international agribusiness study tours in Central and South America and in Australia and New Zealand.

At K-State, Boland also serves as associate director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center and has co-authored more than 20 case studies on cooperatives.

Boland earned a bachelor's in business administration from the University of St. Thomas, where he graduated cum laude. He earned a master's in agricultural education from the University of Minnesota at St. Paul, and a master's and a doctorate in agricultural economics from Purdue University.

Upcoming Events:

Ag Profitability Conferences

Various locations/times

Ag Econ faculty travel across the state to bring you the latest research and tools to equip your business for success. Topics vary by location so check out www.agmanager.info for dates, times, topics, and locations. For more information contact Rich Llewellyn at 785-532-1504.

Wild 4 Ag Weekend

May 8-9, 2009

The College of Agriculture and Ag Alumni Board work hard to provide activities and events to reconnect alumni. Wild 4 Ag weekend has been scheduled for May 8th and 9th. We hope you consider joining us to recognize our outstanding alumni, to play a little golf and welcome our newest members to the alumni association. RSVP Deadline for all events is April 30, 2009. To RSVP for any of the events for the weekend or get more information, contact Sharon Thielen at sthielen@ksu.edu or at 785-532-5121.

Risk & Profit Conference

August 20-21, 2009

An annual conference hosted by the Department of Agricultural Economics that provides an opportunity for key agricultural decision makers to interact with each other and with faculty. For more information contact Rich Llewellyn at 785-532-1504.

Ag Lenders Conferences

September 30, 2009 in Garden City

October 7, 2009 in Manhattan

K-State's annual Agricultural Lenders Conferences are designed to provide the Kansas financial community with updates on current agricultural topics. For more information contact Rich Llewellyn at 785-532-1504.

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The seal of Kansas State University is circular, featuring a central figure holding a sheaf of wheat and a plow. The text around the seal includes "UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE", "RULE BY OBEYING NATURE'S LAWS", "KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY", and "SCIENCE".

Announcing the Agricultural Economics

Emeritus Faculty & Friends SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Agricultural Economics emeritus faculty & friends searching for opportunities to give back to the University, the profession, and the department that has provided substantial benefits to each of us professionally and personally now have a home. There is considerable financial need for graduate student support to continue the success of the department in recruiting and preparing high quality graduate students for leadership roles in agriculture

The Scholarship Fund will support department research and honor outstanding domestic graduate students or prospective graduate students in Agricultural Economics at KSU whose graduate programs benefit the Kansas agricultural economy.

Program emphasis changes over time requiring new ideas and sources of funding, but the results never change. Through this fund emeritus faculty and friends have an opportunity to help ensure the success of outstanding students in agricultural economics, and the University's positive impact on Kansas agriculture.

The Fund successfully opened with almost \$100,000. It is organized to be open ended and will continue to be open to all future gifts. It is the wishes of the Emeritus Faculty and Friends of the Department that this fund should develop into a significant amount. Therefore, a goal of \$250,000 has been set initially to be raised in the next four years.

For more information or to contribute please contact **Orlan Buller**, emeritus professor
obuller@ksu.edu or 785.539.4640

Kim Schirer, director of development
KIMS@found.ksu.edu or 785.532.7517
www.found.ksu.edu

Make A Difference Today

Supporting the Department of Agricultural Economics is easier than you think. You can select the method of giving that best suits you. If you want to make an outright gift of cash, you have several options.

Online

Visit www.found.ksu.edu, click Give Now. Select New Gift and enter Agricultural Economics Emeritus Faculty & Friends Scholarship with the number O50290 when designating your gift.

By Mail

Mail your contribution to the KSU Foundation, 2323 Anderson Ave., Ste 500, Manhattan, KS 66502. To make sure the Department of Agricultural Economics benefits from your generosity, be sure to include a note that indicates your desire to designate your gift to Agricultural Economics Emeritus Faculty & Friends Scholarship with the number O50290.

By Phone

Call the KSU Foundation at 1-800-432-1578.

Did you know?

Many employers have programs that will match charitable contributions made by their employees and sometimes, their retirees. If your employer offers a program like this, it could increase the size and impact of your gift.

Questions?

If you have questions about making a gift to the Department of Agricultural Economics, please contact Senior Director of Development for the College of Agriculture Kim Schirer at 785-532-7517 or by email at kims@found.ksu.edu.