



## **Alan Rickard**

B.Comm. 2001

**Interviewed by Alex Coroza**

### **So, what year did you start at the University of Guelph?**

I started in the fall of 1996.

### **Where did you attend high school?**

I went to Bowmanville High School in Bowmanville, ON.

### **Can you tell me a little bit about where you grew up?**

Sure. In Bowmanville, I grew up on a farm. Bowmanville is just east of the GTA, East of Toronto, right along the 401. We had a 1200-acre multi-use farm that I grew up on.

### **What year did you graduate from the University of Guelph?**

I finished my coursework in December of 2000, making me a part of the 2001 class.

### **What made you decide to go to University of Guelph?**

Mostly it was the connections with my family and friends who have been there. Growing up on a farm obviously I had a connection with agriculture and had numerous family members that had been and were attending the school at the time.

### **And did you ever visit the campus prior to accepting?**

A few times informally visiting my friends and cousins that were in school. Then, on the official campus tours with my parents, just to see the school before I went there.

## **What did you major in?**

I majored in agricultural business.

## **And did you decide on your major right away? Or did you end up switching?**

I did end up switching. I started taking a science degree in physics and that lasted about 2 semesters before switching over to agricultural business and spending a lot of time there. It was really the path I wanted to go on after being at school and that's what I found out.

## **Do you remember any of your professors?**

The two that I remember very distinctly were Tom Funk, he's a marketing professor and then Alfons (Weersink), who was in the economics department, and they were both very notable and those are the two that really stick in my head.

## **Did you have a favourite class?**

I had three favorite classes. First was financial accounting 101 which was painful when I took it, but it was something that really stuck with me through my whole career. Next, personal financial management, which was an elective I took near the end, but was also extremely valuable for me going into the real world. Then Futures and Options, which was a great course where I learned some advanced stuff I had never heard of before, which I also used in the real world. The classes that I was able to take and use in the real world were the ones that I consider my favorites.

## **Could you tell me a little bit about where you lived in the first year and your experience?**

Sure, Cove 3, Maritimes Hall in the South residence was where I lived in the first year. There were many friends from Bowmanville in the residence, and it was fun. It was kind of a non-traditional dormitory. We were in the towers but also very close with everyone in that residence, and that's where my university experience revolved around during my time in residence.

## **So overall, you enjoyed it?**

Absolutely. Residence was an incredible experience for me and that first taste of freedom living on your own and having controlled freedom is a good way to put it.

## **Could you tell me a little bit about what the campus was like in general and what the social life was?**

The social life I would say was a little bit different than now. The Bull Ring was the nightclub, and the Brass Taps was always called the Keg. The on-campus social life revolved around those two areas, of course everyone was a year older coming on to campus, so it was a little easier to meet folks because we had those bars on campus. That was where the main social life was outside of classes. I remember the intramural inner tube water polo and ice hockey teams that we had were a lot of fun to play. It was also co-ed which got everybody together as a group. But that's what I remember what the big social life was like around at that time.

## **Regarding OAC, did you ever feel like a part of it?**

Yeah, there's certainly the connection with OAC as a school and I retain that connection today and have been involved with the OAC Alumni Association and Alumni Foundation. My class was a little bit disjointed because I was switching programs. I was jumping across all the required courses in different years. But overall, there's a deep connection with agriculture and with the school that I feel very close to.

## **Could you tell me a little bit about some of the OAC traditions?**

The tradition that I really held on to was Aggie Pub, which is the best one, and the College Royal as well. It's nice to be able to showcase those types of things to students in the community. With College Royal and Aggie Pubs, they are just a whole lot of fun and unique within the University of Guelph that you don't get to see in other schools.

## **What were some of your favorite memories at the University of Guelph?**

Most of them revolve around those first couple of years in residence. I had a great time there and it was where I learned to be a bit more grown-up. Making new connections; the social life and the social setting around those activities that we did are my favourite memories. Those memories are really focused around the relationships that I made and built while at the university.

## **And are you still friends with the people you went to university with?**

Yeah, there's quite a few. I would say I remain good acquaintances with most of the people that I have lived with. And there's probably half a dozen of us that are still very close friends who would see each other on a regular basis even now with our families.

**You don't have to answer this next question if you don't feel comfortable sharing your answer, but did you go through any tough times during your university years?**

I would say not really. The biggest thing I can remember was really that sort of 4th year anxiety around that next step of life. Going into real life, having a bank account that was close to 0 and thinking I've got to do something now in the real world, and this wonderful university life will be left behind. So, there was a little bit of anxiety there but generally my university experience was a very positive one.