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First, I want to express my deepest appreciation for the honor you have bestowed on me, and thank anyone who was involved in the selection process. It is very special, and a bit overwhelming. I also need to thank my son, Alan, who has assumed much of the burden at the banks for 28 years. Al isn't here because he had a conflict—he had the misfortune of having to go to Bermuda for a board meeting! I also thank my partner John and grandsons Abe and Brig, who are CEOs of two of our banks.

I'm also indebted to the bank staff and the people who made it possible for me to do other

Tubbs Expresses Thoughts on Receiving Bruning Award

Edward L. Tubbs, right, receives the Bruning Award plaque from grandson Abe Tubbs. The presentation was made during the CBA/ABA North American Agricultural Finance Conference in Winnipeg in October. The award is presented for lifetime achievement and contributions to the banking industry and is named after Frank Bruning.



things. Included in this group is my wife, Elaine, who was the banks' human resources director until March of last year when I relieved her of those responsibilities. We had both lost our spouses within a few days of each other and decided life would be better together than separate. I also want to introduce Abe's wife,

Nicole, who is an attorney. We thought we should have one in the family. She gives a preferred rate. And the head of our agriculture lending department, Rick Prull, also is here.

I'm sure you all would agree that the greatest satisfaction in what we do is seeing our customers succeed. We don't do it for recognition, but it's still awfully nice when it comes after so many years.

An event like this makes one reflect on how we arrived at this point. I'm one of the children of the Great Depression/WWII era who are fast becoming an endangered species. I graduated from high school in a class of nine in a town of 100, and couldn't have gone to college without a scholarship and three jobs. I see only a few old-timers here. I see Les Peterson and Ollie Hansen, and the rest of you look very young. I believe the influence of our upbringing has given us a perspective on life that is unique for a number of reasons, one of which is our emphasis on security because we remember when it was a scarce commodity.

I never expected to be a banker. When a local bank manager approached me suggesting I fill their need for a "farm representative," I resisted. This was a new concept in the 1950s, but I finally agreed to try it. We really had no blueprint to follow. Farmers were apprehensive about a farm visit from their banker, but in a few cases I think it enhanced their honesty.

For example, I recall one borrower who hired a truck to go to Wisconsin and bring home a load of veal calves so his cattle numbers

would be right when the banker called. However, the cattle he should have had would have weighed 1,500 pounds. Not an acceptable substitution.

In another call, the farmer wasn't home and his wife was in the barn with a cow that was having difficulty delivering a calf. I put a rope on its feet and we pulled the live calf. I've never seen that service advertised in any bank's marketing plan!

It's been fascinating to watch agriculture and banking evolve over the past 40-plus years. Technology changes, but the basics do not. It's an awesome responsibility to respond to these changes and find our niche as farms and banks became larger and fewer. If we community bankers are going to be survivors, we must find our niche, which I believe is agriculture, small businesses on Main Street, and industrial development in our communities. If our town and service area deteriorate, our bank is destined to follow.

I have every confidence that you will cultivate your ability to look beyond the numbers and put your resources as lenders with the borrowers who have the probability of success. There will always be those who aren't making it and substituting credit for income has never worked. As St. Francis once said, we need "the wisdom to know the difference."

I want you to know that this is probably the highlight of my business career, and I thank you. I wish you well as you struggle with whatever lies ahead.

jal