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Texas trends focus of A&M symposium

Millionaire says state should rely on itself

By Olivier Uyttebroeck
Staff Writer

Texas needs to rely on its own qualities and strengths to dig its way out of the current economic slump rather than trying to play "catchup" with states like Massachusetts and California, Midland businessman Clayton Williams said Friday.

Williams spoke in Rudder Theater as part of the "Texastrends" symposium sponsored by the Memorial Student Center's Great Issues Committee.

"I believe we have to take what we have — which is agriculture and entrepreneurship — and move with that, rather than playing copycat," said Williams, who earned an animal husbandry degree at A&M in 1954.

"The role of higher education is absolutely critical, but it alone can't carry the burden of bringing Texas out of the slump," Williams said.

He said entrepreneurs will play a key role in diversifying the state's economy, as they have in other states.

"They (Massachusetts) have made that move to high-tech and I'm sure that MIT and Harvard helped, but there were a lot of other things happening there," he said.

Williams referred to himself as a microcosm of Texas since his diverse business enterprises represent many of the state's major industries, including oil and gas, banking, real estate, and agriculture. For this reason, his own business experiences are representative of the state's economy as a whole, he said.

"For a period of time I really believed... that I was going to build a major oil company," he said. "My production reached 15,000 barrels a day very quickly. I had several hundred thousand other acres under lease and I thought it was all going to produce... I thought I was 6-foot-2 and handsome.

"I doubled my assets every year for 25 years. If you're not careful, in those 25 years you can be fooled into thinking you know what you're doing."

Williams said he's kept his companies profitable by scaling down his



Photo by Tom Ownbey

Clayton Williams, speaking at the Texastrends Symposium Friday, jokingly prays for the intelligence to keep him out of the banking business in the future. "I got into real estate and banking by mistake," he said, "and I admit it, God, and I'll never do it again." See related stories, page 6.

business six times in the past four years and by moving into new, more promising ventures such as telecommunications.

Williams first got into the long-distance telephone business to solve a problem that arose in one of his real estate ventures, he said. In the early 1980s, Williams built a large office complex in Midland, but it would have taken six months for AT&T to hook up the plaza for long-distance telephone service, he said.

In the meantime, the office complex stood empty at a cost of \$4,500 a day. One of the younger men in the company suggested the company buy its own long-distance equipment. The complex was ready for occupancy within three months.

A short time after that, Williams built the first digital system between Midland and Dallas to cut down his company's communications expenses. Today, communications is the fastest growing of Williams' many business interests and it is challenging AT&T and other large

telecommunications companies for new business.

"That company grew 20 percent a month in the first year through the toughest times Texas has seen," he said.

The company now has 51,000 customers and continues to grow at a rate of 10 percent a month, he added.

"We had a company that had to find its niche in a changing world," Williams said. "With the deregulation of AT&T you had many, many opportunities open up."

Williams' stance on university funding is not one that will endear him to educators, however. In the past he has refused to lobby for continuing large-scale university budgets, especially in the area of geosciences, he said.

"Nobody should be exempt from what I've been through," he said.

Williams now has nearly as many employees as he did at the height of the oil boom in 1981, but less than half as many are working with oil and gas now, he said.



Photo by Anthony S. Casper

MOBocracy

Kyle Field falls under MOB rule during the halftime show of Rice University's Marching Owl Band Saturday at the A&M-Rice game. The band's performance featured a "salute to immigrants" which included this tribute to "synchronized swimmers" crossing the Texas-Mexico border.

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Pope calls worldwide truce today

PERUGIA, Italy (AP) — Pope John Paul II, greeted Sunday by thousands of people singing "We Shall Overcome," said his call for a worldwide truce today may seem utopian to some people, but not to those who believe in God.

The pope condemned what he called the "culture of contempt" which regards other cultures as primitive, insignificant and unworthy. Such an attitude, he said, leads to a "culture of death, a culture of violence and a culture of evil."

The pope has called on warring factions everywhere to lay down their arms for 24 hours today.

He was scheduled to spend today in Assisi, 15 miles from this central Italian city, to pray and fast for nine hours along with leaders of 11 other religions.

In Perugia, a historic city adorned with medieval buildings and churches, thousands of people lined the streets Sunday to hear the pontiff.

In the central Piazza IV Novembre, the pope was greeted by about 8,000 people waving handkerchiefs in various colors. A group of American students led the crowd in singing the song, "We Shall Overcome," in English.

"No one can hide the great difficulties of our time... holding entire humanity in bondage of great fear," said the pope, standing under a canopy on the steps of the Cathedral of San Lorenzo overlooking the square. "The prayer gathering in Assisi is for dialogue, peace and hope," he said. "It may seem as utopian to some, but it is not so for all those who believe, for those who take God and his words seriously."

He stressed the church's commitment to promoting "an authentic spontaneous and true dialogue."

Vatican officials, meanwhile, said they were heartened by the responses from governments and insurgent groups to the pope's call for an international truce.

Paper: Syrian worked undercover at embassy

LONDON (AP) — A newspaper reported Sunday that an undercover Syrian agent worked as a clerk for 20 years in the British Embassy in Damascus and tricked a diplomat there into signing a visa for Nezar Hindawi.

Hindawi was convicted Friday of planting a bomb in luggage his girlfriend tried to bring aboard an Israeli airliner April 17.

Britain accused Syria's govern-

ment of aiding him and broke diplomatic relations.

The *Sunday Times* said Syrian intelligence placed a Palestinian man in the British Embassy's visa section, and that he persuaded embassy second secretary Anthony Arnold to sign Hindawi's visa "as a matter of routine."

It said the man's role was revealed by a Foreign Office investigative team that went to the British Em-

bassy in Damascus after Hindawi's arrest.

The report did not identify its sources.

In Tel Aviv, meanwhile, an Israeli expert on Syria said Hindawi was under orders from Syrian air force intelligence chief Gen. Mohammed el-Khouli to blow up the Israeli El Al plane. El-Khouli reports to Syrian President Hafez Assad.

The Israeli expert, Yossi Olmert, spoke on Israel radio and said his in-

formation came from evidence supplied to Britain and Hindawi's own testimony. He did not elaborate.

The *Sunday Times* did not identify the Palestinian clerk who allegedly worked for Syria, but said he was a senior assistant in the visa section.

It said he was about 50 years old and had gone to Syria as a child.

After Hindawi was arrested in April, the Palestinian disappeared from his job and now may be in the

United States, the newspaper said. When he disappeared, so did the embassy's records of Hindawi's visa applications and those of several Syrians who were given British visas, the paper said.

The British Foreign Office confirmed that the senior assistant and a receptionist quit their jobs at the embassy after Hindawi's arrest, but refused to comment on the circumstances.

Employee held hostage in 7-11 store

By Mike Sullivan
Staff Writer

A Texas A&M student held hostage for more than 20 minutes during the robbery attempt early Wednesday morning of a College Station 7-11 store said he feared for his life throughout the ordeal.

Jeff Mukogosi, a senior mechanical engineering student from Kenya, said he was training for a night position at the 7-11 at 101 Southwest Parkway when the robbery took place.

Mukogosi said a gun was held to his head by one of the three masked intruders throughout most of the robbery and that the intruders threatened to "blow his brains out" several times.

He also said that he was nearly shot by police officers at three different times.

"I just came out of it miraculously, and thank God I'm here," Mukogosi said.

The robbery ended after two College Station police officers shot and killed one intruder and wounded the other two. Three hostages were taken by the intruders, but none were harmed.

Mukogosi said he credits the A&M student who saw the robbery in progress and called College Station police for helping save his life.

Mukogosi said he learned later at

the police station that the student stopped at the 7-11 on his way home from the library and saw the robbery in progress.

The student left the scene, went to his apartment and called the police, Mukogosi said.

College Station Police Capt. John Kennedy said police are not releasing the name of the student because he is a witness.

Kennedy said the department is also withholding the names of the two officers who did the shooting so they won't be disturbed.

He said the officers were given several days off to recuperate.

Mukogosi said the robbery began about 2 a.m. when three masked men, one carrying a shotgun, one holding a machete and one unarmed, walked into the store.

He said the intruders ordered him and the manager, Coleman Conner, the only people in the store at the time, to lie on the floor at the back of the store.

"At that point he (one of the intruders) went into my pockets and he picked out my wallet," Mukogosi said.

He said the intruder took five dollars out of his wallet and then threw the wallet and the papers in it on the floor.

Then, Mukogosi said, one of the intruders made him get up and go

into the walk-in cooler where the intruder made him lie on the floor.

"All this time he had his gun directly above my head," Mukogosi said. "He kept telling me that if I made any move, he'd blow my brains out."

While this was happening, Conner said he was at the front counter being ordered by the other two intruders to empty the cash register.

As he was emptying the register, a customer pulled up to the store and came in, Conner said.

He said that before the customer came into the store, the two intruders hid. One ducked below the counter and the other slipped behind an office door, Conner said. He said the man behind the office door had a gun pointed at him.

The customer, James F. Crouch of Millican, said he was coming home from his job at St. Joseph Hospital when he decided to stop and get a cup of coffee.

Crouch said he went to the back of the store to pour himself a cup of coffee and then noticed Mukogosi's wallet and papers strewn on the floor.

"I turned around and told the manager there was a billfold laying there, and he asked me if I would bring it to him," Crouch said. "I was down there picking it up, and the

next thing I knew there was a gun at the back of my head."

Mukogosi said one of the intruders put Crouch in the walk-in cooler, and both he and Crouch were forced to lie on the cooler floor as one intruder guarded them.

Conner said one of the intruders was taking beer and cigarettes out of the store and loading it into his car when the police pulled up.

The two intruders ran to the back of the store, and that's when Conner said he was left alone and locked himself in the office behind the counter.

Mukogosi said the two intruders came into the walk-in cooler at that point and began speaking with the third intruder in Spanish.

Crouch said the intruders took him and Mukogosi out of the cooler and used them as shields as all of the men walked down a short, narrow hallway toward the back door of the building.

Crouch said he couldn't tell whether the intruder had a gun on him or not, but he could see that one of the other intruders was holding a shotgun to Mukogosi's head.

When the intruders realized the building had been surrounded by police, Crouch said, the intruder holding him pulled him back into the main area of the store and started pushing him toward the front door.

"He (the intruder) was trying to use me as a shield," Crouch said. "I figured the officers weren't going to shoot me to try to get him (the intruder) so I pulled a fainting stunt on him (the intruder) and hit the floor."

At that time the intruder holding Crouch ran to the hallway area at the back of the store where the other men were, and two police officers came in through the front door, Crouch said. Crouch said he ran out the front door at that point.

Mukogosi said he was the only hostage left with the intruders, and the intruders were still trying to get out the back door.

"This is one point where I just missed death because I was the one who pushed open the back door, and the officers were out there just ready to shoot whoever they saw," Mukogosi said.

He said that later at the police station the officer who almost shot him, came up and hugged him and apologized.

Mukogosi said, "He came and hugged me and said 'I don't understand why I didn't shoot, I almost shot.'"

Mukogosi said the officer said he thought Mukogosi was one of the intruders.

After that, Mukogosi said, the in-

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