

EPISODE: #17 Hosting Dr. Cullum Clark, Director, Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative and Adjunct Professor of Economics

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Readings and welcome to the 17th installments of our podcast series the workforce Lynn's brought to you by Tarrant county college in North Texas I am Shannon Bryan executive vice president for corporate solutions and economic development and I will be your host moderating strategic conversations with employers and economic developers on all things related to preparing in growing the workforce today in the future. Please help me welcome today's guest Dr. Cullum Clark. Dr Clark is the director of the bush institute SMU economic growth initiative an adjunct professor of economics at SMU he leads the bush institute's work on domestic policy and economic growth welcome Cullum is a joy to have you here today.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Thanks so much an honour to be here.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Absolutely happy to have you here and excited to get into to some of the content so let's start can you tell us a little bit about you and tell us about your work at the bush institute.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Sure well I'm a native of Dallas I'll skip through a lot of things but I actually had 25 years working in the investment industry and I think having been in the private sector kind of informs what I what I do but I'm now engaged in a really exciting for me at least second chapter in life I went back to school earned a PhD in economics at SMU and after that had the opportunity to join both the bush institute and SMU as an economist.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Do we need to say pony up.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well Tarrant County I'll be careful about what to say their rivals here but yes.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Take a pause and say pony up.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Pony up So at that so I really have 2 jobs I I'm an adjunct professor economics I teach a class in modern economic history to undergraduates mostly juniors and seniors. And most of my time I spend doing think tank work at the bush institute and in particular what I do I lied what we call our blueprint for opportunity program and that program is focused on the challenge of creating inclusively prosperous high opportunity places regions cities towns neighbourhoods white place. Because I think we've all become aware from all kinds of evidence that's come up in recent times that so where a person is powerfully influences their prospects in life and it's unrealistic to think that everyone's gonna move to say Silicon Valley or Manhattan I really think the path to an economy that works for as well as many Americans as possible necessarily runs through economic development in places where people are workforce development where they are addressing housing challenges and other impediments to people you know flourishing getting ahead in the economy and so what so what so I'm very focused on that so what we do in our blueprint for opportunity program we're really trying to lay out an analysis of the challenge of what are all the factors holding back places from being high opportunity places and what does as a policy agenda policy for federal state and local government but also there's a role for the higher ed sector there's a role for the not non-profit sector what does a sort of a comprehensive agenda for creating more high opportunity places look like.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Very interesting that all goes hand in hand it's like a puzzle correct.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

That's how I do it

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Yeah, absolutely so tell us with that what is the current it just for your opinion what is the current economics of Texas specifically North Texas

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well I think that when we look at the economics of Texas Shannon we really need to look at different scales and understand the different scales it's things look very different let me say what I mean by that take the state as a whole people talk a lot about the Texas miracle in some respects the state is doing very well economically relative to most other states. If we break things down a little bit it so happens last year I had the opportunity to collateral but called the Texas triangle which is about the triangle formed by the 4 major metropolitan areas of the state the Dallas fort worth area Houston Austin and San Antonio areas quick aside some say only in Texas but we connect 3 points on a map 4 points on a map with a triangle but as you know from then map tech because it does actually work but here's the point that the 4 big metropolitan areas of the state account for almost all the economic growth of the state we have a very bifurcated situation in which each of those metropolitan areas on the whole have dramatically outperformed most other metro areas as well as rural and small town America in terms of people growth economic growth job creation and so forth the rest of the state which I am out to something on the order of the bath the third of the population and a vast area is really not doing very well on the whole populations not growing a great many Texas counties that are more small town and rural are shrinking in population and I think there is a pervasive sense that things are going very well economically so that's the first way to make that scaled division so Dallas fort worth metro area like say the Austin or Houston metro's doing very well on the whole but then we have to look a little bit more closely and realized that the Dallas fort worth metropolitan area is a very big place with a lot of contrast within it so it is very easy to find some of the fastest growing most booming places in America I'm thinking largely of very fast growing suburb in places in Collin county and Denton county in particular north of Dallas and fort worth and then it's very easy to find places and I don't mean you know small little corners but major parts of the city of Dallas in major parts of the city of fort worth that are experiencing great economic distress for example southern Dallas the way it's conventionally defined it has been home to about 600 thousand people. Okay that's out of the metropolitan area has almost 8000000 but 600 thousand of them live in the in the southern part of the city of Dallas that whole area according to data we've put together has experienced essentially no housing growth no job growth at all this century even though the population's edged up a little bit so from an opportunity point of view things have actually been going in reverse in southern Dallas I think this out although I'm not as much of an expert on the city of fort worth I think the same thing goes for like the south-eastern part of that the city of fort worth.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

I would say that was true so what are the initiatives under way that you can speak to that are going about to counteract some of the issues that you're finding in your studies.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well if we talk about in particular let's take Dallas County and Tarrant county where you have these kind of big core cities that have booming areas and struggling areas you know I think that in both cases there is a great deal of talk radio study actually I think prime more than there's ever been before in my lifetime and yours which is heartening of what to do about the struggling parts of our cities in North Texas and then in in big cities around the country so the fact that it's being heavily discussed studied that there's you know task force is being established the mayors are paying attention to a very high degree is good news the actual progress today is much more modest but I think that there's efforts to fight so what's actually happening I think you can maybe kind of break things down into sort of the economic development piece which classically means get jobs into the struggling areas we can also look at workforce development training people so that they can do 21st century jobs that will earn a living wage and create upward mobility for them and that themselves and their families and housing just on all 3 I would say we're in the early stages of what could be very you know potentially large progress and I know you and your institution play a large role

in that in the Dallas County Dallas college does so. There's plenty of good efforts to fight on the economic development front take the city of Dallas the city council has passed a what kind of a pretty long list of initiatives that in some form or another are intended to essentially bring jobs and economic vitality to southern Dallas they're just now in the process of creating a semi-autonomous is I would call it economic development corporation something many cities have been here before the city of Dallas has not had that and I think there's a growing appreciation for what would it take to bring jobs to the to this vast area I think there's an understanding for example that well there are there are some institutions that are working quite well in the southern part of the city so you might want to sort of build out from those pockets of success I'm thinking for example in the higher at world university of North Texas at Dallas and Paul Quinn college in the far southern part of the city I'm thinking of major investments in real estate that are bringing with them exciting activities such as re imagined red bird taking what was in a sense they deeply distressed. Hold you know enclosed mall and massively renovating it Peter Brodsky who is that full disclosure a friend of mine and I'm an investor in this deal but it's done a magnificent job at taking this old facility most people didn't believe it could really work and of course the idea was not to just modernize the Mollen have like a you know a 21st century version of a mall like out of stranger things or something but actually to take that space and totally reimagine it so that now for example they're just now opening a major facility owned by UT southwestern they will have a children's health facility there so you'll have major health care facilities and a variety of other activities that wouldn't in the past have taken place at them also so there are good economic development efforts afoot maybe we can come back to the workforce development housing ones as well.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Sure absolutely so let's transition a little bit to talk about businesses coming to North Texas so recently CNBC recently named America's top states for businesses in 2022 Texas is listed as number 5 the first was North Carolina followed by Washington Virginia and Colorado what is your opinion of our current economic state as it relates to work force in our ability to attract and retain the businesses in North Texas.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well I'm first of all happy to hear that it was number 5 it kind of for it for 2 reasons one I'm I certainly am a I want to see our state succeed and I want to see it be a great place to do business who doesn't who's here in Texas so 5 out of 50 is pretty good but I think at the same time there is a sometimes I think a sort of triumphalism going on out there in people's thoughts on how Texas is positioned that can be a little dangerous complacency is never good for any kind of person business or for that matter city or state that's kind of writing hi and so being fifth versus first is maybe at least a small nudge that we still have some things to think about why do we send despite this massive movement of businesses into Texas why do we typically fall a few spots below number one I think there are 2 big factors that people often times site we talked about in our work one is we actually have some fairly restrictive rules that hold back some kinds of small business for example of a very hot issue is around occupational licensing rules that the state sets that basically determine how stringent are the rules to get a license to operate some kind of small business the classic case everybody likes to bring up is how tough for the rules for example to become a hair brighter another example I've done some research on recently as food trucks how tough are the rules governing whether you can start but they tracked a food truck is a great potential entrepreneurial business for a you know a chef and chef who wants to be an entrepreneur to get started it's a lot less capital than a you know an indoor restaurant to get waited to get going but it also tends to be a pretty heavily regulated industry in in the big cities of Texas there's that there's a ranking out there about how kind of business friendly those rules are and actually we're kind of middle of the pack we're not actually among the best places to do business in a Couple of us very specific fields so we do have some clean-up of rules to do but the other issue which may be limbs alternately largest is great places to do business yes they're gonna get the rules right yes they're going to have you know moderate taxes and reasonably commerce friendly regulatory frameworks but they're also going to create the work force that can do that we get can do the work when businesses particularly large ones decide where they want to operate I think we probably all agree one of the top considerations in their mind is can they find the people that they want to hire to do the job.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

They need a skilled workforce to fill their pipeline and sustain it for the long term.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Of course it goes without saying and yet perhaps it needs to be said because I think that you know any time I've had the opportunity if I know you have to talk to a lot of employers also a lot of economic developers who are trying to attract employers to different parts of say the North Texas region as well as along the way I talk to people you know competing against us in other parts of the country and that everyone says the same thing it's all about the people it's about the talent it's about the work force can you find it in the place you're trying to in the place you're going you're operating or thinking about operating and that's becoming a tougher and tougher challenge for businesses we have a on the one hand we have an increasingly knowledge centric economy in general the skills that businesses are looking for are going up you know they're there people need to know more than they used to know but on the other hand we have really difficult demographic trends that total number of people who were in the working age population in the United States is just barely growing now that's never occurred before in the history of our country so you know supply and demand it's challenging and so if you're a city region state Et cetera I would say that from soup to nuts you know from pre K. education right through higher ad community college training programs the whole continuum of creating in a sense lifelong learners that can figure out how to do the jobs that employers need that's issue number one that needs to be that if anything that top priority for our you know state and local government.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Right so can you speak a little bit about that from a technical standpoint is how does education and training impact our economy.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well first of all relate when I think of as a kind of one of the most powerful. Conclusions from our work and I would say from the work of economists you know for a long time and that is education human capital talent in effect over a long enough period of time it's not just the most important thing it it's the it's the only thing it is the thing that determines the economic growth the success or failure of not just cities but nations so for example in our work I think we've added to a pretty substantial academic literature that shows very clearly the states the cities that have the highest educational attainment levels also have the highest income levels it's pretty predictable and moreover we find I think interestingly it's not just that if you individually. Have a relatively high education level like you've done a master's degree or professional degree of some sort that you make more money that is certainly the case maybe the less obvious point is that if you live in a city or a region that on the whole has relatively high educational attainment levels even if you yourself have let's say a somewhat lower education level you make more because we all make each other more productive.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

We all rise together.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

We all rise together it's good to be a working person in a well-educated place.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Absolutely can you speak a little bit about the education attainment level in North Texas specifically.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Yes so in the Dallas fort worth metropolitan area we're kind of a middle performer among major metro areas on the whole big metro areas and big cities in America have somewhat higher educational attainment levels than smaller ones in America today and we benefit from that from a relatively large size but we don't outperform relative to other large metropolitan areas we look kind of middle of the pack we're lower than some of the big kind of tech focused metro areas of the coast of the west coast in the northeast were higher than some other that hot typically higher than midwestern or southeastern metros were kind of in the middle but that was sort of masks a certain amount of variation within the population but we are a little bit of a you know we are tail of cities we know we all know that there's great

inequality in America I would say we have pretty severe inequality in educational attainment levels across different groups based on race based on the economic circumstances of one's parents so when you start to disaggregate things for example you find that you know it in the populations that are fortunate enough to live in like suburban cities with really good school systems actually beat we create great educational attainment levels in some of the most economically distressed places the most underinvested places in North Texas we don't create very high educational attainment levels that's a big challenge for us we got to work on that.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Absolutely tell you with the work to both you and I do we can both see the landscape right now for Texas for North Texas specifically since we're both here there's a lot of high tech companies moving their operations here into North Texas and I melt every day talking to those companies well I'm sure you are as well and we with those positions that they're bringing here in highly tech their higher education attainment level with a growing population of a more educated work force the more we see the diversity of our population grow how is our economy impacted by diversity on business.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Diversity is a complex topic in the realities are changing as we speak let me try to say 2 or 3 things about it number one. Inevitably the work force of North Texas is going to become much more ethnically diverse in the sense that the white percentage is going to go down the essentially all groups of non white populations are gonna go out particularly that Hispanic and Asian populations we know that that this is inevitable we can see it in the young people who are already here and we can see it in the in the probability that they will we will have continue to have significant inflows of immigrants in particular from Latin America and east and South Asia so that's happening whether we like it or not the it does create both challenges and opportunities I challenge is. That we already have as I think I noted that rather significant educational disparities between groups and we've got a lot of work to do to address some of the you know the injustices and the obstacles that have stood in the way of for example are black and Hispanic populations you know catching up to where are white and Asian populations are that's just the that's the reality if we fail to do it in North Texas then the changing demographics mean that our work force will not be very well prepared for mid 21st century work so that's clearly the case now diversity does a couple more things about what it means going forward to live any more diverse region in a more diverse state in a more diverse country economists have overwhelmingly found that diversity is good diversity tends to lead to more creative places more innovative places wherever the diversity comes from we're not only talking about places that may be in which in which you know American cities to grow more diverse over time we're talking about all of human history when places are magnets for newcomers from elsewhere and you get this great mixing of people mixing of ideas and cultures and so forth out of it tends to come in a basin creativity and economic growth that has been a great you know driver of progress in history including in you know in modern day cities around the world at the same time diversity is a a kind of a political challenge because humans don't always immediately adapt to it so well sometimes they get concerned about a changing world around them and so what we see for example in the literature is that places that are become significantly more diverse can have some can face them political stumbling blocks they're even eat often times you see for example less investment in education and other public goods for the very natural human reason that if voters are looking at the you know the populations that are growing in saying well that's not. That you know those are my kids that those are those are different kids from it in a different part of town ultimately from a different country say I'm kind of less interested in investing a whole lot of that it is a natural human thing but it's nonetheless a challenge that great cities and great states and great nations figure out how to get past we have work to do to get past it

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Right and you have to communicate about it right you have to have communication you have to be able to make plans and.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Absolutely I'm doing I'm doing research right now we haven't come out with this report yet

but we're going to and I think a month or 2 doubt immigrants in America's cities net nationally not just in North Texas. And one of the things we say is that we think you know in a world in which the foreign born population it amounts to about 17 percent of the people in the metropolitan areas of America to pretty large percentage that that IT leaders whether they be mayors higher ed leaders business leaders if they're smart out of not just let's say compassion but out of economic self-interest they will declare their town their city their company to be a very welcoming place they will say we're glad you're here you everyone has a chance to contribute and we absolutely embrace this or that a growing population of people from wherever it is from South Asia from Afghanistan from that you know from Central America and we want to help them learn earn and contribute

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Very nice I like that a lot so let's shift for a moment because this is a great segue into the next question I have for you is around small businesses and entrepreneurship and specifically America has more than 30 million small business currently what are your thoughts on current and future state of small business ownership here is specifically again coming back to North Texas and how do small businesses play a role in our local economy of DFW.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

While small businesses play a critically important role Shannon I think that it's sad it's important first of all to recognize that neither small businesses nor large enterprises exist in a vacuum in a healthy economic ecosystem there each in a sense playing off of each other you know the exact status of a great big enterprise creates all kinds of niches for small businesses to fill and in a place with a really thriving small business environment while some of those companies become large right there's a lot of there's a lot of complexity to it we have a challenge in America which is that the rate of new startups each year has been going down since the nineties even our population is considerably larger so on a per capita basis it's much lower there's a lot of discussion about why that might be is it cultural is it sort of the aging population because maybe those of us who are somewhat older less inclined to to go out and take a rest can start businesses is that perhaps that the environment has grown less friendly through various regulations ins and so on that maybe have kind of over regulated some industries out of being maybe in the tech world some would argue or not just tech but in a handful of sectors that may be the growing market power of a handful of giant companies has sort of closed off a lot of matches that might otherwise have been you know kind of occupied by some small businesses lots of things to debate it's not really my focus to try to resolve which of those it is but I'm very focused on how do you create the best possible conditions for small businesses to get started to grow into drive and so you know there's a there's a lot you can say about it we were just talking about the role for example of newcomers testator North Texas of all kinds whether they be newcomers from elsewhere in the country or from elsewhere in the world. It turns out that even though the total number of new businesses being spark started each year has gone down actually the number of businesses being started by immigrant entrepreneurs in America cities has skyrocketed so are you really a surprisingly large number something like more than 25 percent of all small businesses today are actually started by immigrant entrepreneurs they're punching way above their weight relative to their percentage of the population maybe it's something about the immigrant experience maybe people sort of self-select when they come from other countries and incur a lot of a lot of you know. Economic and cultural challenges to get here that they're already in a sense enterprising risk takers on average it's hard to say but nonetheless that fact is very it's very evident so creating conditions in which newcomers want to want to come to North Texas and start businesses here that would be part of of you know creating a or be building on the success of our entrepreneurial environment here I think that there are a number of categories where at Texas and the big cities of North Texas have not totally arrived in creating a sensible business friendly environment for startups there's lots of categories had mentioned food trucks but there's plenty we can be as long lists of sectors that really could use some sensible amount of you know Texan deregulation we like the regulation in Texas we got plenty around where we can actually do it quite sensibly in ways that would be all good news no downside and then you know education right I mean if the startups that come along you're likely to be increasingly in knowledge

centric industries well we have to have a population of people who are who have the knowledge.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Exactly and we have to have the other educational institutions who can provide that.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Absolutely that's core.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Yeah, absolutely so I guess you may have answered part of this question but is it from your viewpoint is their disparity of diversity among small businesses in our region specifically in what does that mean regarding future challenges of those businesses and their ability to survive and thrive in the region.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

I guess you mean diversity in terms of the disparity in terms of different groups how they're represented absolutely yeah so first of all we clearly have this phenomenon of immigrant entrepreneurs that intricate migrant entrepreneurship is alive and well in the cities of America and it certainly alive and well in North Texas so for example we see a really large role for example from it Indian Americans. Starting all kinds of knowledge centric businesses particularly in the North Texas suburbs like in Collin and Denton county so there's all kinds of wonderful success stories there so what we are as good a place as any place in America for immigrant entrepreneurs to settle and to you know to pursue their dreams and start a business on the other hand we also is the under representation of our black population that raises a lot of questions about well how is it that one helps aspiring black entrepreneurs too for example access capital to access the kind of networks that help a small business get going the social networks if you will you know I think there's a lot of effort to put him in a Dallas based on the call the Dallas entrepreneur center I think there's a comparable entity in fort worth I can't remember the names up so we have these incubator entities that are consciously trying to help aspiring entrepreneurs it in all parts of our cities and from all groups to you know to pursue their dreams to get to get a business off the ground.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

I'll make a plug just a real quick for Tarrant county for Tarrant county college in particular few years ago we started a program called the everyday entrepreneur venture fund that is focused specifically on minority businesses in Tarrant county and we've been running that for a couple of years now working on our second cohort in its nose minority businesses was customize education mentorship in seed funding to help them elevate their business to the next level.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

That's fantastic and Dallas college in the in the Dallas County is doing similar things and you know I think if we look at this in the in the broader historical context I think it's important to recognize that programs like this are relatively new we're doing a better job today than at any time before in our history at trying to address those disparities and that I guess I'm a congenital optimist that makes me. Optimistic that given time we will actually see good success with programs like the Tarrant county college when that you that you mention so it's Betty you know I think people need to recognize this is a long game there's not some kind of you know I'm magical dust one can spread and instantly a bunch to startup businesses happen we all know that the failure rate among startup businesses is high it's a risky thing it's a very much a you know a kind of a world in which people sometimes that sort of fail serially and then finally I arrive at the right idea we all we all know this history this is how you know Silicon Valley was built and it's our great many small businesses were built so I think if we take the viewer and it for the long haul we try to create a good favorable environment for people to start a business we try to create the resources for example in higher ad and in the incubator programs and so forth give it long enough I think that we will we will see some of those disparities close.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

So that's a great segue into. Kind of a unique question I have for you Cullum and then is if

you were to write a recipe for North Texas economic success what ingredients would that include and why?

Dr. Cullum Clark :

It's a wonderful question Janet thank you I had the opportunity to write a report that came out early this year that basically argued that throughout history and certainly throughout America's modern history that there is a kind of. There's a classic formula for the success of cities regions and you know but replace it even states for economic success so let me state that formula that I try to apply it to North Texas basically I argue that cities that have been successful as great commercial centers great magnets for talent great and innovation centers business centers and so forth have typically had 5 characteristics that they you know they're not perfect and everyone but they tend to be outperformers number one there is a very heavy focus on education and innovation let me say by the way that these are. It may sound like cliches, but I could easily explain why a great many places don't live up to these ideas I never want. They care a lot about innovation and education number 2. They have generally commerce friendly that regulatory environments it's a good place to do business number 3 they do better than most at affordable quality of life they're good places where people want to live they may not they're typically not really cheap places to live because people want to be there in that drives up home prices for example but they're not outlandishly expensive such that only the wealthiest can live there number 4 their very much welcoming of newcomers something that cities often times find it hard to beat newcomers of all kinds from elsewhere because often times it's the person who just showed up that brings a new idea and lastly they have a strong sense of community a sense of shared destiny such that people will work together to solve common problems okay sounds a little pie in the sky but in this report I really tried to illustrate all of the ways including with a lot of recent data in which cities that outperform on these metrics do actually. You know they thrive better they say they people want to be there the populations grow the economies grow their jobs there's that a lot of innovation new businesses and so forth so applying that to North Texas I would say we're better than average on Sam and pride not fully or we want to be on others I think on the education and innovation front we need to recognize that we've been in. You know at okay player in general are now creating educational attainment among the people who grew up here, but we've been phenomenally successful at attracting highly educated people from elsewhere. We need to kind of re balance that a little bit and so you know put in a plug for Tarrant county college and the other higher ed institutions of our region you all are front and center we are I work at SMU as well we're all front and center in trying to you know to make that to make that recipe working or Texas that's one thing we do in North Texas better than average on the affordable quality of life front for sure it's a major reason why so many people have been moving here but we do have housing challenges that could undermine that advantage over time particularly we have that in our core cities Dallas and Austin are probably the 2 most dysfunctional housing markets in the state of Texas fort worth somewhat better typically the fast growing suburbs are a lot better although they too are kind of challenged can we build enough housing to keep up with rising demand and not become deeply unaffordable as for example cities on the west coast have so we need fixes to our housing policies for sure I actually think we do quite well on welcoming newcomers on the whole I think we do reasonably well on me a sense of community and art although as we grow more diverse we have work to do on that and we are on the whole it we've been talking about this today we do really regret rather well on operating commerce friendly policies so if I do if I was to say what we most need to focus on above all number one education second of all we really need to address our some of our housing policy challenges and essentially produce more supply growth to keep up with the demand and maintain the tremendous advantage in affordable quality of life that we have had over some other regions of the country.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Very nice so call you obviously do a lot of research obviously you have to read a lot of books I'm curious to know what books you are currently reading.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Thank you for asking because I love talking about books, so I'm disciplined I always have more than one but going. At once but let me just talk about 2 groups number one I really like

in addition to reading kind of theoretical type books I really like reading books about particular places at particular times in affect how they got the way they are or what they're currently trying to accomplish so too that I'm I currently are part of the way through their very good 1 is about the development of Florida it's called bubble in the signed by Christopher Knowles very interesting story about how cities like Miami actually came to be going back to the early twentieth century it was a great Florida land boom in the 1920 so Florida developed in a very particular way another book is called city on the verge by mark Pendergrast and it's much more contemporary it's about efforts to really kind of transformed Atlanta particularly it's perfectly centers on me the development of the beltline trail which before long will fully and circle the city of Atlanta you know open up all kinds of businesses and apartment buildings and so forth coming up alongside the trail people up turns out like living next to trails where they can you know walk and bike and so on. So that's been kind of a transformative project really tells that story so I like these kind of stories that are not just theoretical but get down to what really is happening in Atlanta say and I had the chance to write a book that to some degree does that about Texas cities myself with my co-authors the Texas triangle so that's one category the other categories I love history in general I love to try to understand what it people of other people up against in their own time and also how did we get to where we are I've had a really deep interest for the last several years in nineteenth century America because I think in the nineteenth century for better or for worse we created the world that we live in today. That was the world that with that in which America rose to become you know the most prosperous major economy in the world but it was but it was also a time that created some profound injustices we all know so I've been reading a biography of Ulysses grant by Ron Chernow which is that absolutely brilliant biography that that that really caused me to completely rethink the role of grant particularly and not just winning the civil war for the union but as a president really trying to make reconstruction work to create more tended to address at least some of the enormous injustices facing the you know the newly freed a people in the aftermath of the of the civil war it's a great it's a great story and another book called that is The Zealot and the Emancipator. By that history name brands is about to either sell it being John Brown the he might recall raided Harpers ferry in an event that helped to spark the civil war the emancipator being Abraham Lincoln so this kind of tells us something about the struggle to contain the growth of slavery in the years just before the civil war tells us about the coming of the civil war and has some fresh insights I think into a topic that never ever grows old which is the greatness of Abraham Lincoln so very interested in how we got here historically.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Very nice so I'm taking some copious notes of books that I need to add to my library so thank you for that and I would be remiss if I did not ask the question so pertaining to the book that you co-authored the Texas triangle with so we find that

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well, it's available and on the Amazon is also available in local bookstores. So I know they have it at the local bookstore in Dallas interrobang Bucks I hope that it's available at local bookstores in fort worth I need to check so yeah it's a published by Texas a and M. press I had the opportunity to co-author it with 3 great colleagues from around the state so learn learned a lot about you know San Antonio and Houston and so forth so by all right I do think that we had a kind of a story to tell in the Texas triangle that was a little bit fresh we really wanted to get Texans to rethink in a sense look in the mirror and see taxes as it really is today as 8 metropolitan state yeah it's the world of you know oil wells and ranches and so forth it's still with us to a certain degree but Texas actually has a larger percentage of its population living in big cities and metropolitan areas that most states so Texas is something very different than people often times that think of it.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

As absolutely well I will be grabbing a copy and hopefully I can get a signature next time I see you.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

I would love to do that.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Great so call up just to close here I always like to ask my guests this question what advice might you share with our younger generation. Regarding your future planning for education job readiness and career success.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

I will see what I tell my daughters I expected so probably like a lot of one of your other you're a lot of your other guests have probably said. Be a lifelong learner. Take your formal education very seriously as long as you can get everything you possibly can out of it and then stay at learning for the rest of your life because the world keeps changing you've got to update your skills your knowledge of what's going on I would tend to advice I would certainly advise that people go through their formal schooling with a plan that they really want to sort of learn a set of like a kind of a body of knowledge that will put them on a path towards a you know it towards a the kind of career that they want to have but at the same time I kind of caution against up overly narrow approaches to one 's education I have found in my own life you know having done I was very fortunate and had a really wonderful liberal education that you know I find in my actual adult life and in my work I call on everything I did in school. The math classes the history classes the science classes the literature classes so that's not a case for being sort of direction less than just doing a little you know kind of a little bite here and a little bit right there at the at the you know cafeteria of education there is certainly a case for achieving some depth and some genuine knowledge of you know of certain fields and certain but kind of bodies of knowledge but you know I think that I've rarely ever I've never met anyone who kind of look back instead a whole lot of what I did in my education was a big waste of time on the contrary I've encountered countless people have said I wish I had done more.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Yeah you may never made a whole lot of sense what we were doing it but later in life insurer circles back doesn't it.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Absolutely you know I would also say that to any young person once they're actually in a field once they're doing some kind of job to recognize them they in in in addition to this doing the job well and getting their best every day they also should become students of the wider context the wider you know what's going on in the in the economy in the sector that they operate in because there is no job that is not in some sense getting disrupted by technological change and young people need to be students of that and stay on the right side of that I right when I first was in the investment world I learned how to do a job that barely exists anymore which was being a kind of a an analyst of stocks who could you know could build a take the financial statements and you know build a model of what the company is a. You know future earnings and so forth well things that took me days to do the computers now do in them seconds and so actually frankly a lot fewer people do what I used to do and the skills I learned them you know it kind of became obsolete on the other hand hopefully I I stayed at you know trying to keep modernizing the skills so that I could stay you know active in what I was doing and I would recommend the same to anybody.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Very nice any other items you'd like to share with our listening audience today as we close out.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Well you know we've been talking about North Texas a lot CNN and I guess bottom line message I want to convey is. North Texans are bullish on the future I think that in general we have a sense that we're on a good path and I think people should be bullish I think they should look forward to a day when it's likely the case that for example the Dallas Fort Worth metropolitan area will grow larger than the Chicago metro area and become America's third largest. It is probable that we will grow as a center of all kinds of industries I think will grow as a technology center I think will grow as a life science and biotech center in quite a few categories I think that you know that that the North Texas of 20 years from now will look very different than the North Texas if today and on the whole it will be a more prosperous booming place and we can't say that about every you know region and city of America so it's

right to be bullish but at the same time it's always wrong to be complacent and I think that we I guess I would really urge listeners to contemplate with whatever they're doing how can they actually take on the hard work of building that future. Is it doesn't just happen right if we are to you know to help raise up that work force that can do that will you know do the jobs of 2020 years from now 2042 well it we won't we won't just sort of happened upon that we will have built our institutions built all kinds of you know specific programs within Tarrant county college within our higher ed system. We will have created new pathways for an increasingly diverse population to go from you know to go from pre K. all the way into a career in and it's you know there there's a lot of work I had to do that so I you know salute you for what you're what you're doing and the same thing goes and you know businesses every whenever someone is doing wherever they have a chance to make a difference I would just say you know put their shoulder to it and lean into the challenge of creating a bright future for our region and our state and our world.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

Dr. Cullum Clark thank you it has been an honor having you here today.

Dr. Cullum Clark :

Thank you so much.

Shannon Bryan (Host):

I appreciate it enter a list in the audience we appreciate you listening to the work force lands and we look forward to hearing and seeing from you on the next edition thank you.