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## Reel 24

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Paul Ecke, Jr.

Well, born in '55, so yes, grew up in the 60s here in Encinitas right here on this ranch. In Encinitas? Well, a lot of things have changed but a lot of things have changed. There's still the downtown which I remember and of course there are more houses in the back country but it's still the same to me, it really does. There are people who think Encinitas is spoiled but you know what, it's still one of the greatest on earth to live and it's still a little small town. I don't mind the fact that there's more people today, I can't ride my motorcycle in the back country anymore, but then again I wouldn't be doing that anyway, so it's still a great place, we've got the beach right here and I think it helps that we have a nice piece of property here called the ranch that we get to play on still.

Where Max is growing up is in a house on a street without the kind of property around when I was growing up. I had a lot of fun here at the ranch. Because we had the barns to play in and the piles of dirt to play on and we had places to make forts, and all the stuff that kids like to do and of course there was the back country, the big ranch that has been developed now that was a lot of fun to explore and hike around and in those days parents let their kids go wherever they wanted and I went a long way away from home every day and I'm not sure my parents to this day know what I was up to on a regular basis but it was a great place to grow up, it really was, couldn't ask for a better place.

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My grandfather and I had a very close relationship really from the very start. He encouraged me to have fun but also he was very proud of the fact that I worked on the ranch and I would work after school and I would work

during the summers and I would work during Christmas and he would like that. My grandfather was quite an adventurous guy, when he died in 1996, he still had a sense of adventure and I remember a couple of things. One time we were in Switzerland, where my grandmother was born, so they used to take us over to Switzerland over the summer, a number of times when we were teenagers. And I remember one time my grandmother, I was with my cousin Dwayne and my grandmother and grandfather, my grandmother wanted to go back to the hotel. My grandfather wanted to stay with us, he wanted to stay with his two teenage grandsons and he was 80. And he loved to hike and we loved to hike and my grandmother loved to hike and we were out hiking in ? and he wanted to collect Aidelweiss and my grandmother had told him and us that we need to take care of him and he couldn't get off the trail and he needed to take care of himself and we're kind of in charge. So my grandmother left and we're hiking along and my grandfather said I know there's some Adelweiss underneath this ledge and so you boys, you hold on to me while I lean over this little cliff while I pick the Adelweiss. And so we didn't know whether that was okay or not but it's our grandfather so we said okay. So we're holding him over the edge of this cliff, he's 80 years old, and my grandmother comes around the corner, she didn't really leave, she decided to come back and she caught us holding my grandfather over the cliff and she almost killed us, I mean we almost dropped him because we were so surprised but we didn't of course, so that was one little adventure. He also loved to drive cars. He was born in 1895, so as he grew up, he sort of grew up with the automobile, the automobile was brand new when he was born, so during his childhood, cars were sort of a new thing. but he loved cars all the way until the very end, and his house was up on the ranch and he would drive from his house to the ranch, it was about a mile, but it was all back roads on our own property. So even though it really wasn't okay to drive on the street, it was okay to drive on the ranch and anyway there was a few little accidents here and there. One funny story was when he had a driver, probably about 70 or 75, the family and my dad specifically said you need a driver, you can't drive on your own anymore. you drive too fast, you don't pay attention, your eye sight is not so good, so they got a driver. And so there was a nice Mexican man named Lupe and Lupe was in charge of driving him and Lupe needed to go to appointment down in San Diego. So Lupe got in the car.

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-pull over. And Lupe said excuse me sir, and he said pull over now. He said okay. Get out of the car, get on the other side, I'm driving. He said, Mr. Ecke, I supposed to be your driver, and he said I don't care and so he drove to San Diego and drove back. And so then he was driving back from San Diego and the general manager of the ranch at the time, a man named John Knight happened to be driving on the highway at the same time and looked over and there is Paul, Sr. My grandfather driving and he knew full well that it wasn't okay and honked the horn and my grandfather looked over and said uh oh and his face was white as a sheet and came back to the ranch and my grandfather begged him not to tell anybody and of course he did. But that was the way my grandfather was, he wanted to be independent, he wanted to do his own thing. he followed the rules for the most part.

One other funny story was, maybe this doesn't belong for public consumption, but he was very into real estate, he loved property, he bought a lot of property over the years and he loved fiddling around with it and making it have more value. So one time down in Camino Real, where the Target center is today, but this is way back when , way before that, he had somebody come to the ranch with a tractor and start pushing dirt around making a pad that wasn't there before, that was when we weren't a city, so the regulations were much less stringent so he didn't think he had to pay attention to the rules per say cause there really wasn't rules, but there were some rules. So someone from the county called up and said, what are you doing down there in El Camino Real? And my dad said I don't know, what do you mean? Well, there's been dirt moved around and there's no permit. So my dad said I don't know what's going on but let me check it out. So my grandfather was confronted and he said well yeah I guess something happened down there and I'm an old man and I really don't have a really good memory anymore, I don't have a good recollection of that. But all of us believe he knew exactly what he was doing, he just wanted to use that as an excuse, being an old man, which in fact he was, but he was so old he didn't know what he was doing. I don't think he ever did anything illegal or malicious or immoral, he wanted to get things done like a lot farmers wish it was today where you could push dirt around when you wanted to push it around and you didn't need to go through a nine month environmental review process and those were the good old days for us farmers.

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My grandfather did travel a lot, he had to build a business from scratch basically and he traveled around with a supposedly poinsettia bare root stock plant that was how we use to do business, that's what we used to sell. And he would travel around with that in his suitcase in trains in cars and drove all around the United States in a model A, and he would be gone for months at a time. And then in later years, more of when I was aware of what he was doing, he would travel to Europe a lot. Once the domestic business was established, he started to establish the European business, so he would travel in Europe, part of that was a vacation because both he and my grandmother were born in Europe and so they enjoyed being in Europe in general but they were also traveling around to see customers from Scandinavia to Greece and they would be gone for months at a time and that's when their kids were grown, they would actually invite grandchildren like myself, my sisters and my cousins during those time periods as well. The kind of traveling I do is a little different but it's still traveling, these days our new farm in Guatemala is taking some travel time, it takes a day to get down there and a day to get back so if you're there for two, three or four days, then you've shot a week. I've traveled a lot to Europe, we still have a business over there and we're doing that kind of business development over there. And then I travel a lot to Asia, we have agents over there, we don't have production per say, but we have agents over in Asia so I travel there on a fairly regular basis. And then there's the domestic travel, trade shows, customer visits and that sort of thing that I do. You know it's just part of the business, you can't do everything on the telephone or everything on the internet, you gotta be there in a lot of the cases.

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I know some stories but I'm not the expert on it cause it wasn't really my era because I was either a kid or I wasn't born. But my grandfather came to Encinitas in 1923, in 1923, Encintias was literally a stop on the railroad tracks. There wasn't really water here for agriculture but my grandfather was sure that there would be water someday, he did his homework and figured out that there was water coming eventually so he bought some property here he bought this ranch, what we call a home ranch. That was a little bit of a bold move in my opinion cause there really wasn't that much, there really wasn't a lot of flower growers here and there wasn't that many people period here. but he came and he sort of knew even in those days

that there would probably be strength in numbers and if you had some other fellow flower growers with similar issues and interests, that that would probably be a good thing for him to have, surrounding him, and so he did help the people like Bob Weidner who is no longer with us but his wife, Evelyn Weidner, still runs the nursery over there along the freeway. So he brought people like Bob Weidner and then of course the Thortons came and the Actors came and Chuck Aides was here, there was a lot of interest in flower growing here primarily because the weather was so good. This is great weather for people, this is also great weather for plants. We can add whatever we want, if we need to grow on the wet side, we just add water, if we need to grow on the dry side, we all know it hardly rains here so that's easy to do. we can pretty much be assured that there's gonna be enough light on a regular basis. It never gets too hot, it never gets too cold. Growing flowers here is a real joy, it's a real luxury, I don't know any place that's better. Guatemala of course which is a nice place as well, one of the reason it's nice is because it doesn't have any heat and I would say if there is one downside of Encinitas is that you do have to, for the kind of growing we do you have to have the heat even in the summertime.

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Well, life is more complicated today because we are in a city. I'm not saying a city is bad, it's just different. In the old days, we would dump our trash in canyons and we would fill the canyon with trash and then when the canyon was full, we'd push some top soil over it and then we would farm over it and that's an age old way to do farming and today you can never do that. There's a whole bunch of issues with water runoff and again I support the general concept of taking care of the land and the environment and most farmers would tell you that they are stewards of the environment, that's where they make their livelihood is off the land and off the environment, collectively we've gotten a lot smarter over the years using a better pesticide and in some cases, no pesticides. These days, some of our greenhouses are free of insects so we don't even have to spray pesticides anymore and I guess to some degree and off shoot of having more regulations so that's probably a good thing overall. But it is harder, quite frankly it's harder to get things done, if you want to build a new building, a new office, a new greenhouse, now we have to get permits and you know what, we didn't get permits in the old days because we didn't needed a permit to put up a greenhouse by these days that's what you have to do. and the downside of that is it just takes longer to get things done and

business today requires that you get things done when you want to get them done and in nine months you have to wait for a permit.

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I do think we have a complex business. Most people around here in San Diego county is what we do is grow blooming poinsettias at Christmas time and I've had people, even people that know me well ask me what do you know the rest of the year? Do you go on vacation? What do you do? I have to explain that that's not what we do only, we do grow a fairly large blooming crop but that's only 10% of our revenue these days, what we do these days is grow cuttings. We grow cuttings in Guatemala, we will ship those cuttings to Encinitas and propagate those cuttings and put roots on them and sell them to growers. Why is it complicated? Well, we have a breeding program, that's another thing that we do, we breed poinsettias and that's quite complicate with all the patents and managing all that intellectual property, managing all our licensees that have to be licensed to produce our product and then they have to be audited and make sure that they are recording accurately. And now that we've expanded our business with the flower field line spring and garden plants, instead of one crop, poinsettias, we have 160 crops. And all the crops we need to learn how to grow, how to sell, how to market, and we have a flower field alliance now with four other companies in the business and that's a whole new set of relationships that we need to manage and I'm the co-manager of that and there's a lot of other things that make life complicated. Just like I would think most business people in general would say that life is complicated today. The speed of business is much faster than it used to be and we do have regulations to deal with and things are bad so I don't know, who knows, my grandfather and my dad had to deal with freezes, we don't deal with freezes because we have greenhouses. They had to deal with diseases that were not easily controlled by chemicals because there were no chemicals prior to WWII. Does every generation have it's challenges? I'm sure they do. this generation, it's challenging to keep it all moving ahead. We've chosen to not sit still and move evolve and evolution which means change is difficult and stressful at time for me as well as for all of our good people we have working for us.

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That is not my goal to achieve recognition. I don't think it was their goal either, to tell you the truth. It might of been an off shoot of what they did. My grandfather starting the crop and developing up to a certain point and my dad taking it to a whole new level with all the promotional activities, the poinsettias on Johnny Carson and the women's magazines, I'm pretty confident that their motive was simply business development, they wanted their business to survive, they weren't out for recognition and nor am I, I have less desire than my dad trying to get recognition or notoriety, but what are we doing now? We are doing some fun and exciting things. We are moving our production off shore, like many companies in the United States, it's too expensive to build products in the United States, labor cost, regulatory issues, and the biggest one for us is energy. Down in Guatemala, we spend about a million dollar less than we do here in Encinitas and that's a big number and you can't ignore that so that's a big thing, that's one thing that I'm proud of, we've moved production off shore, that's a big change for us. The other big change for us of course is the diversification of the flower fields product line both in terms of genetics as well as the promotion, we are going to be heavily promoting the flower fields line. We've joined with these other three partners, the owners of Goldsmith and Fisher, all family companies, all independent, all very good companies in their own right. And that's a whole new way of doing business for us, we're sort of used to doing it on our own, we've changed, we've changed with the times and the flower field spring plant, garden plant line is going to be a big deal, it's going to be a huge deal. We hope, our goal is for it to be the nationally recognized brand and the garden centers across the US. That's something that we've never achieved before, we've never had a retail presence outside of San Diego county, we've never had a consumer presence outside of San Diego county, you can't go to Texas and find a Paul Ecke poinsettia, no one will know what you're talking about. You can in San Diego and who knows, maybe we'll do that someday, maybe we'll roll out the Paul Ecke brand of poinsettias nationwide, we've talked about it but we haven't done it yet. So there's a lot of great things that we're doing but I can assure you that they're not to be famous, they're absolutely necessary for the business and when the TV crews come here and Sunset magazine comes here, my answer is that I'm always available. That PR machine that we've built over the years is something that is a good thing for us, we like that and we cultivate that and we're proud of that but it's not for personal recognition.

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Oh, I'm sure there was doubt in my grandfather's and father's mind, and there was doubt in my mind. Was there a conscious effort to groom me to come into the business, there definitely was. Working in the ranch since I was eleven in a semi-meaningful way and certainly when I was a teenager to make some money and then during the summer I'd work most of the summer and then during the Christmas time I'd work the whole Christmas season and then when I was old enough to drive the truck, I would drive the truck up to LA which I loved, still do to the flower market up there. So I was groomed in some ways, I would travel with my dad on business trips, travel to conventions, so there was all that. Then I had to make a decision about college, but I skipped a year between high school and college, I skipped a year, and that put people into a tizzy, my parents at the top of the list. But I did go to college, and I went to a liberal arts college, Denison University in Ohio. My dad went to Ohio state, and I went to look at that and it was too big and quite frankly too scary after graduating here in Encinitas.

I needed to get a floriculture education and maybe that was the time when I decided what I was going to do. I did go to Colorado State and got a floriculture education, my dad actually wanted me to get a business education, he thought that would be more important. But I told him that if I was going to come back to the ranch that I really needed to know the flower business, I didn't want to be a pure business person and try to manage a business, and it is complicated and we think it's still important for our managers, many of our managers are floriculture people and they learn how to do managing later. Anyway, after Colorado state, I took another year off, went to Mexico, went skiing for a year, learned how to fly an airplane, then I went to business school at Duke school of business which is really where I learned about business. So after Duke I was looking for a job out in the real world and I couldn't find one and I called my dad up and I said I've been thinking and maybe I should come back to the ranch right now. And he said no and I said seriously I've been looking for a job and I can't find one and let's just cut right to it and save some time and I'll come back right now. And he said I need to go get some experience. And that was a little bit of a blow because I was having a hard time finding a job, but in retrospect I'm glad it worked out that way. All the rest of my friends got a job and went to Europe over the summer, and I stayed in North Carolina during the summer and if you know NC during the summer, you know it's hot and humid, and I wasn't having a good time especially since I



didn't have a job and I was sending out resumes and finally Hewlett Packard called up and said we're looking for somebody like you and I said I was interested and I went up to an interview up in Palo Alto and they said you're hired, you've got a low level job but we're interested if you're interested and I went to work there for a fairly low salary, compared to my peers but it was still a great job -

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My dad called and said we're ready for you to come back. And that was probably an interesting point of my personal development because I was actually having fun at Hewlett Packard, I was not the son of the boss, I wasn't family, I was just another employee, one of sixty thousand employees at the time and I was having a great time. I really enjoyed what I was doing. So I thought about it for a while and I agreed to come back. My grandfather was probably 92 or 3 at that time and he was really happy for me to come back and I could tell he had a sense of relief when I got back and so that was good. And I started working, and that was about 14 years ago and one thing led to another and I became the CEO and eventually the owner and it all worked out. I'm glad I came back, but was it all preordained? Yes, but there was a chance that I could go out on my own and stay at Hewlett Packard and that would have been fun too so it all worked out.

It was weird to have my dad always around as a former president of the company, most of the companies I know don't have the former president of the company stay on but family businesses are different. Family business situation, it's not all that unusual, but in the real world, in comparison it was unusual. There was times when it was difficult when he was there. He was an high energy guy and he would have twelve ideas every hour or certainly every day and he would give me those ideas and I couldn't process them all. What was maybe a little more difficult for me was he would go to some of the management team and give them the ideas and give them the assignments and then they would be confused. Well, who should I follow, Paul Sr. or Paul Jr.? Then we would have my grandfather here too and then we had three people giving out orders and that's even more confusing. In retrospect it was fine, it worked out and it was good to have my dad here cause he did a lot of things that I either didn't do because I didn't know they needed to be done or didn't want to do or wasn't good at. He was very good and up until very recently was very active in the political arena,

industry arena and then quasi-governmental agencies, water committees and colleges and all that stuff. As things evolved and I took on a more leadership position, he went outside and he spends his energy out there. But then recently he's been sick and he hasn't been at the ranch and hasn't been here for about a month which now I find is very weird because a lot of us miss him because he's always been here and we always assumed that he'd be here forever, just like my grandfather was here forever. And so now it's a little bit weird and we're all hoping that he gets better and he gets back to work and I know that as soon as he does get better, he will get back to work there's no question because that's what he loves to do.

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I think most people would say that all three of us, all three Pauls. Paul, Sr. as I know him as an older man, was relatively quiet. He was not Mr. Promotion he pushed himself to go out and push the poinsettias when nobody even knew what poinsettias were and so obviously when he was younger and when he needed to, was a promoter. My dad, on the other hand, was a natural promoter. He loved it, he thrived on it, and most people that interacted with him would tell you that he was an extremely, a promoter is a promoter and he could get people to do stuff that most people couldn't get other and he applied that promotion to customers in the industry, other industry people, organizations in the industry, Society of the American Florist, he did it here locally for the YMCA and he really enjoyed being in the public spotlight. Again, not for ego reasons, I really believe that was not his motivation, 100%, I think he really enjoyed getting things done, he had that passion for getting things done, building a Y, building organizations, Ohio State Floral Association, SAF, that's what he enjoyed doing, I don't think he did it for himself, he just liked to work for other people to get some stuff done, and then I'd say the same thing at the ranch. Myself, I'm not nearly as outgoing as my dad is, that is not my natural style, I like to be under the radar more than my dad is and a lot of people have told me that I'm a lot like my grandfather which I think is kind of a common thing. Fathers and sons have a kind of relationship and grandfathers and grandsons have another kind of relationship. My son has a good relationship with my dad. So it's kind of natural cycle of life. Fathers and sons are not usually carbon copies of each other, I mean there, I'll push myself to be the promoter when I need to do it and I don't think it's quite, I don't think at least that it comes as naturally for me as it does for him.

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Managing people I think is difficult for a lot of people and quite frankly it's something that I don't think I'm all that great at, but I have to do some but the approach I've taken whereas my dad took more, you know it was a different time and a different era in those days when he was starting his career at the ranch and leaving his career. My dad was more of a one man show, he really liked to be involved in every decision sort of like the hub of a wheel, he liked all the decisions to go through him and I don't want to say dictator, because it wasn't a dictatorship, but it was more like that than it is today. I've taken a different tact because of my personality as well as the way of the world. the world has changed, and in the 60s and 70s you could tell employees what they were going to do and they were going to like it and today you don't do that, you try to build consensus and work through others and that's the road I've taken. I've chosen to hire some very smart people and I let them have a lot of rope and it works out most of the time, not all the time, but most time I let our management team make a lot of decisions. I'm involved in most of those decisions but I am not leading every discussion and I am not leading every decision cause even if I wanted to I think it would be almost impossible with the amount, complexity of our business today I honestly don't think one man or woman could do that. So my dad and I have taken on different styles but as I said I've heard it said that every era has, in a family business, if it works out right, there's the right person at the top for every generation and I think my grandfather was the right person for his generation and my dad was the right person for his generation and I hope I'm the right person for this generation because times do change and the last hundred years that were been a company, there's been dramatic changes and so I'm proud that we're still alive and looking forward to the future.

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Family business is different, it's special, it's good, it's not good at times, I'm very proud of our family business for the obvious reasons, because we've been successful and because we've survived. I'm also proud because we did good estate planning, that's not something that you talk about most of the time but ten years ago my parents thought that it was time to do some estate planning and they sold the business to me. and not all people in family business have the guts to sell the business to the kids because a lot of

people want to contain control until they die. And my dad was very forward thinking in my opinion we sat down and he said this is a good time to do this for a whole bunch of reasons, are you ready to do it and do you want to do it? at age 35 I had my midlife crisis, which is a little early I think for most people that was the biggest decision was do you want to buy the business? because if you buy the business baby, you're stuck, you're not going anywhere, you're not going to sell it in five years, you're basically signing up for a lifetime. So it was a big decision, but it was a good decision, it was a good decision for me, it was a good decision for my parents I think. They got to have some cash flow, and I got to have the business and start building the business in my own image and not a lot of family businesses do that and so I'm very proud of that. But one of the things that are not perfect about a family business and I would a change it if I could, it does change the relationship with your parents, specifically my dad. We spent most of the time talking about business and when we were together in a social, whether it was dinner at my house, or his house or my sister's house, Xmas, Easter, mother's day, father's day, we'd end up talking about business. which was exactly what my grandfather did, I remember there were always talking about business and it was a family thing. and I think it's probably not the right thing to do, I think that there's a time for family and a time for business and I try to keep that separation. One of the things I did, which is different than what I grew up in, was we used to live smack dab in the middle, my dad walked across the patio to work, never drove anywhere, he just walked across the patio and he was at work early in the morning, he could stay late at night, he could go in on Saturday and Sundays and I chose not to do that. When my parents moved out of the ranch house, I had to make another decision, do I move in with my wife? Didn't have a family then ,any kids at least and I said no, this is a nice house, much bigger house than I was living in at the time, much fancier house, but I really kind of like my privacy and I like to be close, but not right on the ranch. So we chose to live off campus as they say and we still do and I'm glad we do because I got a five minute commute but it's still far enough away where I can separate, I can go home from business and be at home. Our son Max is 8 1/2 now and we don't talk about business, that's not something he's interested in and nor am I interested in talking to him about cause he's a kid and I want him to have fun as a kid so we're running things a little bit different but again times have changed.

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Yeah, the other day we were driving home from school and we're driving along and out of the blue he said, dad, is the ranch going to be mine someday? And I said, well, do you want it to be? And he said yeah. That's pretty much the sum total of our conversation to date but I thought it was interesting because I'm not sure I ever had that conversation with my father or grandfather, certainly not one that I initiated. But who knows? He may be interested when he grows up, he may not, but either way it's fine with me, at this point it's fine with me either way, if he wants to go his own way, then more power to him, if he wants to come back here, then more power to him. He's still young, 8 years old and I hope he had fun as a kid and we have time to figure all that out.

Encinitas has got a long history of flower growing. My grandfather was here in 1923 and started growing poinsettias and he kind of had a specialized crop, nobody else was doing that here and he kind of always had his own thing. there were other flower growers here, that grew different things, they grew potted plants and there was a lot of cut flower growers here. Cut flowers again, they grow very well in Encinitas, the weather is very good, they have a good source of labor, regulatory environment was fine, it was a good place to grow flowers for a long time. But things have changed today and there are flower growers today that are kind of hanging on and I feel sorry for them in a way it's tough all over but there are flower growers that are still growing cut flowers and I think they're going to have a tough time hanging in there on a sustainable ongoing basis. People will be here and will be able to eke out a living for a while, but I think the days are numbered for those guys, the labor is more expensive, the utilities are more expensive, prohibitively expensive, and an issue we're all going to have to deal with is water. This summer with the electric crisis, the power crisis, where we had brown outs and black outs and actually had interruptions with electricity and gas and those are really hard to work around in our business and I can imagine in most businesses. When the boiler goes off and you're heating your greenhouse, those are not fun to deal with. So all of those things are sort of ganging up on most people, including us, we're under our own set of challenges. And I see that there are some growers that are moving into niche markets, growing specialized cut flowers that you can't transport from central America. So those guys are making the best of their situation. What we're doing is moving all of our stock off shore where we can grow it economically, we are hopefully going to rebuild our facilities to focus on propagation, not stock which we've been doing for the last 30 years, and do product development here

and we'll have a smaller blooming program but it won't be the same as it was before. But what I'm trying to say is that we are in the midst of rapid change, and we've been changing in the last ten years, speeded up in the last five years, and I can see another five to ten years of pretty dramatic change and I think everybody else in our business that doesn't change will have a really tough time ahead of them and that will be sad because there will be less flower growers and I'll be in that same position my grandfather was, I'll be the only one here and I don't want to be the only guy here, I want everyone to make a good living and survive and right now I'm a little bit worried as well as I think a lot of people are.

### **00:54.02:20**

Well, the idea of the biotech center, what we call the Paul Ecke science center, is the idea is that the biotech business is something that San Diego is good at. We are very good at the life sciences biotechnology industries is thriving here it's one of the concentrations in North America if not the world and we want to take advantage of that. But we can't take advantage of it in a way, maybe the most logical way, is you build your own lab and you do biotechnology and you transform your plants and that's how you get at it. well, the problem with our business at we, meaning the Paul Ecke ranch or almost anyone in our industry, the biotech cost to bring a product to market is enormous and it takes forever, we can't afford it and I don't think anyone in our business can really afford it. so what did we do. we decided to be creative here and we have land here, we have excess land basically, we have more land than we need right now after moving stuff to Guatemala and so on and trying to be more efficient here. let's consider building a research center here and let's get a tenant and that tenant would hopefully be in a field that we could apply some of the science. The fields of, the logical, the easy choices would be guys who work on corn, rice, timber that's where the big money is. Row crops, there's billion of dollars of wheat growing in the US and corn growing in the US, but not flowers. So we said let's get those guys in here, let's attract them with greenhouse space which is something they all need. But most of the time don't really manage all that well, they're really good in the lab, they're very good as far as research goes, but then once they put they're creations into the greenhouse which is what the next step is, they often stumble, they don't do the simple things like water and fertilize, and give the right amount of light. Well, we have greenhouses and we have people that know how to grow plants and maybe this would be a good marriage. We could create a

campus like environment, where their scientists could interact with our scientists and that would create kind of a collaborative environment where they could get 80% there out of technology on the corn, or wheat or soybeans, and then we could apply and then we could take it the next 20% which would be much cheaper and much faster, but also be good for them because we all know that biotechnology has had it's PR issues in Europe as well as here and we believe that putting that technology in flowers first might be a good ambassador for that technology, who knows, if someone comes up with something really cool but perhaps controversial will put it into the poinsettia first, let that go into the marketplace, let people get comfortable with it then it goes into food or another crop because I personally believe in biotechnology, but I can't afford it. so that was our idea, our concept, to date we haven't identified a client, a tenant, very difficult to find the right tenant both that will fit for us or a tenant who has enough credit. To build a building like that is a pretty big undertaking, there's a lot of startups out there but they have no credit. So an ideal client, tenant, for us would be somebody who has credit and a track record and of course some technology that we can use and so we're still working on it, it's a creative solution to a complex problem, but if it works out, it would be really exciting.