PROFILES IN PARADISE

Finding the fascinating side of economics

bobHARDEN
e-mail: bob@bobharden.com

For the past year, Dean Stansel, Ph.D., associate professor of economics at Florida Gulf Coast University, has been a guest on my show every Friday. Amid all the "noise" about the economy on talk radio and other outlets, I appreciate Dean's disciplined and grounded yet entertaining commentary on the economic topics of the day.

A fifth-generation Floridian, he was born in Miami in 1969 and moved with his family to Arcadia in 1977. He graduated third in his class from DeSoto High School, and with an interest in politics and public policy, enrolled at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C. In his first course in economics, however, he became fascinated with the discipline of economics and developed an interest in free market economics.

While taking a directed reading course in classical liberal political philosophy, he discovered the works of J.S. Mill, Herbert Spencer, Friedrich Hayek and Robert Nozick. He later found the Cato Institute's work on Social Security privatization and did his honors paper in economics on the passage of the 1935 Social Security Act.

He graduated from Wake Forest in 1991 with a bachelor's degree in economics and political science and began an internship at the Cato Institute, a Washington, D.C., public policy research institute dedicated to the libertarian principles of individual liberty, limited government, the free market and the rule of law. He was serendipitously assigned to work with Stephen Moore, then director of fiscal policy studies (now senior economics writer and member of the editorial board at the *Wall Street Journal*). Their work together was not completed when Dean's four-month internship was over, so the institute hired him as its first research assistant.

Dean was eventually promoted to fiscal policy analyst at the Cato Institute and in just over seven years there, he authored or co-authored more than five dozen articles, including 40 op-ed articles for the *Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Investor's Business Daily, Chicago Tribune* and other publications. He also appeared on television and radio, and gave interviews to print reporters, testified before Congress and state legislatures and spoke on various policy forum panels.

He left the Cato Institute in 1999 and two years later earned his doctorate in economics at George Mason University, where he studied under some of the nation's leading scholars in public choice economics (including Nobel Laureate James Buchanan and his frequent coauthor, Gordon Tullock, who was a member of Dean's dissertation committee).

Before coming to FGCU in 2004, he taught for two years at Eastern New Mexico University. At FGCU, he also serves as the founding faculty advisor for the new chapter of Omicron Delta Epsilon, the international economics honor society.

In September 2011, Dean was one of five economists selected by the Economic Freedom Project to help publicize the findings of the Economic Freedom of the World 2011 Report (available at www.freetheworld.com) and the virtues of economic freedom in general.

He met his wife, Robin, while they were both working at the Cato Institute. She worked in corporate philanthropy at Philip Morris U.S.A. for four years before becoming a full-time mother to Stephen, 9, and Susie, 6, who are homeschooled.

At FGCU, Dean teaches principles of microeconomics, the first economics course that students take, as well as public sector economics and urban economics. ■

— Bob Harden is the producer and host of "The Bob Harden Show," airing from 7-8 a.m. weekdays at www.bobharden.com. The show is archived for listeners' convenience.

Talking points with Dean Stansel

Mentors: Stephen Moore, from whom I learned how to be a policy analyst; and Brad Hobbs, from whom I learned much about how to be an economics professor.

Something your mom was always right about: The importance of going to church.

As a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? A politician. I enjoy solving problems, and I thought that's what they did. (I know better now.)

What would you be doing if you weren't doing this? I'd still be working at the Cato Institute.

First job: Making and delivering pizzas.

What are you most proud of? My family.

Last vacation: Disney World.

Next vacation: A Cub Scout camping trip.

One thing on your bucket list: Run a marathon.

Advice for your kids: Do your best. Don't give up. Treat others the way you'd want them to treat you.

Best thing about kids: They help keep me focused on the things that matter.

Last books read: Steve Landsburg's "Fair Play: What Your Child Can Teach You About Economics, Values and the Meaning of Life" and Ed Glaeser's "Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier and Happier."

Guilty pleasures: Craft-brewed beer and working on my research.

Pet peeve: Meetings.

Hidden talent: I can throw out a pizza dough like a pro.

Naples Urology Associates invites you to a complimentary lecture series on the #1 men's health problem today. You'll get up-to-date information and practical advice in plain English.

All sessions are led by Dr. David Spellberg, developer of the world-renowned "Naples Protocol." Dr. Spellberg, the head physician at Naples Urology Associates, is an award-winning, highly respected leader in the field of prostate health. His chief focus has always been on minimally invasive techniques and treatments.

Seating is limited!

Call (239) 434-8565 to reserve your spot today!

JOIN US

FIRST LECTURE:
How Personalized Care Can Make All the Difference In The World
Wednesday, November 14th at 12:00pm

SECOND LECTURE:
"Beware" What your Urologist may not be telling you
Friday, November 30th at 12:00pm

Lunch will be provided for both lectures.
All lectures held at:
Naples Daily News Community Room
1100 Immokalee Road, Naples

NAPLES UROLOGY ASSOCIATES
A Division of 21st Century Oncology