

While living on a farm outside Williamstown, W. Rodney McMullen attended Grant County High School and graduated as a member of the Class of 1978. Aspiring initially to be an attorney -- and the first college graduate from his family -- Rodney chose business for his undergraduate degree. He concluded this would provide both a fitting pathway to law school, and, given his natural ability with numbers, an excellent backup plan should he change his mind about law school. As a means to the desired end, Rodney enrolled at the University of Kentucky and took a part-time job as a stock clerk at a Lexington Kroger store. He worked hard -- at virtually every position in the store -- and studied hard. Just four years later, Rodney graduated from U.K., having earned a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance (1981), and a Master of Science in Accounting (1982).

By his college graduation, Rodney had acquired a great deal of knowledge about The Kroger Co. and also about the human aspects of leadership. Seeing potential, a supervisor/mentor invited him to stay and grow with Kroger, and he did. Fast forward thirty-three years to find Mr. McMullen serving as Chief Executive Officer (appointed January 1, 2014) and Chairman of the Board (appointed January 1, 2015) of the \$100 billion Kroger Company.

Mr. McMullen is defined, from his high school days at Grant County High School even though his current position as CEO of Kroger, as a "truly nice guy", who is known for his integrity, humility, and kind, easy-going demeanor. These qualities, when coupled with the strength of his business sense, allowed him to grow steadily within the company.

Immediately out of college, Rodney accepted a position at a Kroger retail division office in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he took a lead in automating their financial operations. Four years later, Rodney was appointed Financial Analyst at Kroger's Corporate office in Cincinnati, Ohio, where in 1988, he played a pivotal role in implementing Kroger's leveraged restructuring, which kept the company public and rewarded shareholders. In 1995, Mr. McMullen was elected Kroger's Chief Financial Officer and in this role led the integration of Kroger's \$13 billion merger with Fred Meyer, Inc. (1999) -- making it the nation's largest supermarket chain. In 2000, he was elected Executive Vice-President of Strategy, Planning, and Finance. Three years later (2003), Mr. McMullen was elected Vice Chairman of the Kroger Board of Directors, then in 2009 was elected as President and Chief Operating Officer. From early in his career, Mr. McMullen has been a key player in every major decision that has propelled Kroger to the top of the industry.

Presently under Mr. McMullen's leadership are 397,000 associates who serve customers in more than 3,700 supermarkets, convenience, and jewelry stores under two dozen different names. Kroger also operates 37 United States food processing plants, is the world's largest florist, and offers medical clinics, pharmacies, and fuel sales to attract and retain customers. Under his leadership, The Kroger Company has consistently exceeded their goals for growth and customer satisfaction.

In April 2015, Mr. McMullen was honored as one of only 306 people ever inducted into the Hall of Distinguished Alumni at the University of Kentucky, and in 2014 was ranked by *CEOWorld Magazine* and *CNN Money* in their "Top 10 Chief Executive Officers" selections. In addition to his duties at the helm of The Kroger Co., Mr. McMullen is a member of the Board of Directors of Cincinnati Financial Corp. He also serves on the Board of Trustees of Xavier University and the Gatton College Business Partnership Foundation Board at the University of Kentucky.

Despite Mr. McMullen's position and numerous awards, he remains a humble, hands-on leader. He travels extensively visiting stores, employees, and customers because he understands who holds the keys to Kroger's success. He also possesses a deep appreciation for those who have contributed to his personal success including his wife, Kathy; his parents, William and Henrietta McMullen, who continue to reside in Williamstown; as well as many past teachers and mentors. He encourages young people to be thankful for those who have given of themselves to help them succeed, and to pursue their dreams with honor and perseverance.