FOREWORD

hen Beto first came to see me and said he was interested in writing a book about his experiences on King Ranch, I was very enthusiastic. Through the years, Beto has kept meticulous records about all he has seen throughout his travels and experiences and has kept wonderful notes. You see, there have been volumes written about King Ranch, the rich history of its founding, the cattle industry, its founders and shareholders, but far less about the people, the Kineños (King's men), as they are known. None of the story would be complete without the Kineños and their dedication, hard work, devotion, innovation, and their noble cause. The people *are* King Ranch.

The Master Showmen of King Ranch gives the reader a look at the people who made King Ranch what it is today. For over six generations, Kineños have worked side by side in the hot South Texas sun to generate products of quality synonymous with King Ranch, the birthplace of the American cattle industry. The first skill in animal husbandry is observation, and Librado and Beto Maldonado were masters. Looking at the breeding cattle they were preparing either for sale or show each day and evaluating their merits or flaws became common.

There have been many Kineños over the 150-year history of King Ranch who have added immensely to the success of King Ranch from the time of their arrival in 1853 alongside Captain Richard King. Two men stand out whose efforts, success, and expertise have no equal in their work, loyalty, and dedication, and those two are Librado and Beto Maldonado, master showmen. No one family has made a greater contribution to the success of King Ranch cattle than the Maldonados.

Beto continues today to enrich the lives of those with whom he comes in contact in our visitor program. Beto takes groups and families who come to visit King Ranch on nature and agricultural tours to expose them to the land and its assets. Beto wants the visitors to leave the Ranch with one message: that

six generations of men and women working the land and its assets can improve them and leave them to the next generation better than they found them. This is a noble cause.

Stephen J. "Tio" Kleberg
Member, Board of Directors
King Ranch, Inc.