McWhinnie to Receive Medallion Service Award

Woody Holmes, a UW alumnus and a Sigma Nu, recalls that McWhinnie always had a stabilizing influence on the fraternity.

"He would never let us forget that the principal purpose of college was an education," he said. In 1972, the fraternity invited McWhinnie to its national "Hall of Honor." McWhinnie, who held the rank of professor, has seen marked changes in the university since 1929. But the greatest contrast can be seen, he says, in the leadership of the school.

"In the early years, the presidents were ministers and teaching scholars. The trend today leans heavily toward financial management skills and public relations with the legislature."

He thinks the faculty has had major influence in shaping the university in the early years than they do now. He also believes that the faculty from that era would compete favorably with those present today. "Although they didn't get the nationwide exposure of the students as they do now, and they didn't have as many opportunities for research," he says.

Student too, reflect the differences in society and in the university between 1929 and the present, he says. "It's a more mobile, more sophisticated society. Transportation, for example, is completely different. Students come here by train in the early days, these aren't any highways."

He recalls when he was a student it took an entire day to travel overland from Laramie to Cheyenne and back by way of Tie Siding.

He describes UW now as "truly a state university. It has been very successful in reaching out and serving Wyoming.

He bristles at the suggestion that the "quality education" available at UW now is somehow a recent achievement.

"Within the means available, there has always been quality education here," he asserts.

"Over the years, there has been a transition from education for personal satisfaction to education for professional development," he says.

He cites the growth of professional law, nursing and pharmacy in the state as a result of the developments of professional education in those areas at UW.

Since he retired in 1969, McWhinnie has called a book, "Three Good Years at Wyoming U," a collection of humorous vignettes written by UW alumni. He was a administrative consultant for two years and worked as a university archives consultant for three years.

He is the senior Past Master of the Laramie Masonic Lodge No. 3, and has an unshakable attendance record of 54 years with Rotary, International. He was designated a Distinguished Alumnus in 1957, making him the only person to receive both the McWhinnie Service Award and the Distinguished Alumnus Recognition.

To cite all of "Mr. Mac's" professional, honorary, civic and social offices, distinctions and honors would involve literally thousands of words. Suffice it to say, that his luminous career runs with such other UW pioneers as Frank S. Borrogate, Justice F. Sooile, June E. Downey and John Corbett. Someday, we doubt, he will be memorialized too, on the campus where he has been a fixture for 68 years.