



# Proudly Giving Service to UW

By Rick Carpenter  
ALUMNEWS Editor

C.E. "Jerry" Hollon's commitment to the University of Wyoming as a Board of Trustees President, Alumni Association President and as former Vice President of Development for the UW Foundation has led to his selection as the 1986 recipient of the Medallion Service Award.

Along with the Distinguished Alumni Award, the Medallion Service Award is one of the highest awards given by the University and is administered through the UW Office of Alumni Relations. The Medallion Service Award, which is not given annually, is given for outstanding service and dedication to the University.

Hollon grew up in Lusk during the Depression of the '30s. He said his family went through some hard times but "my folks took good care of my brother and I."

Childhood experiences of plucking chickens with his family to sell for 25 cents each; driving 42 miles each way on Sunday mornings to pick up the mail for his dad to deliver when Jerry was only 12 years old and working in a grocery store for 8 cents an hour at the age of 13 led to a close family relationship, he said.

Hollon said his brother and he decided years ago that "if we are as good to our children as our parents were to us, then we'll be a success."

As a high school athlete, Hollon was a star running back on the football team, where he lettered for four years. In track, he held the 100-yard dash record in the state for all of one week before someone else smashed the record. But his height prevented him from playing college ball, even though some of the University's top players came to recruit him.

"Dad told me I was too small to play football in college and said he would get me through college, not to worry. My father's word was good enough for me," he said.

When Hollon came to the University, he pledged Sigma Alpha Epsilon, a social fraternity. By his junior year, he became president of the fraternity.

During his years at the University, he also became presi-



After spending about three years as the president of the UW Board of Trustees during some of their most difficult moments, Jerry Hollon now works raising major donations for the University.

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dent of the geology club and was a member of the Interfraternity Council and the Scabbard and Blade.

Involvement in those different activities, especially the SAE house, provided Hollon with the necessary human relations skills and leadership qualities that would come in handy in his future.

"If it hadn't been for the University of Wyoming, I don't think I would have accomplished the things that I have," Hollon said. "My fraternity was a great thing for me. To meet with people from all different backgrounds in different degree areas, I think, gave me a well rounded feeling for life."

"We stuck together like iron. We had our problems, but I think that responsibility (as president of the house) was a big help."

When Hollon graduated in 1942 with a bachelor of science degree in geology, he joined the U.S. Army Infantry and was sent to basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Summers in Georgia can be quite discomforting for someone

who has grown up in Wyoming. Hollon was definitely experiencing the heat and chiggers of Georgia when he noticed a bulletin board request for soldiers interested in joining a company of ski troupe officers.

About a week after throwing his name into the hat of volunteers, Hollon was picked for the ski troupe and was assigned to a training center at Camp Carson, Colorado.

Since the ski troupe was an experiment of sorts, the troupes were required to sleep out every night to see how they could do in the mountains. They also learned how to judge distances so heavy weapons could be fired accurately in the mountains.

As the war began to escalate, the Army decided they needed to retrain some of their troupes. Hollon then became head of a training division for about 32,000 men. He built battle courses and trained new recruits on what to expect in Germany and Japan.

When the atomic bombs were dropped, everything stopped, Hollon remembers. Suddenly, Hollon was whisked away to

Japan to serve occupation duty.

Serving on the staff of an Army general, Hollon witnessed first hand the devastation of the atomic bomb and the war-torn countryside. He vividly remembers a 30-mile stretch where there was nothing but twisted metal, piled as high as 10 feet for as far as the eye could see.

Returning from the war, Hollon set his eyes on a master's degree. In the meantime, his brother had started a cement block company in Lusk and needed Jerry's help. Hollon dropped his course load for a quarter to help his brother.

Making 450 concrete blocks a day, Hollon and his brother would take turns each night bringing a load of sand from Glendo, a 65-mile trip each direction. The brother who wasn't loading sand would cure the blocks with an old boiler they had.

Within the next few years, the two gathered a Veterans' Administration loan (\$3,500), a Reconstruction Finance loan (\$17,500) and a Small Business Administration loan (\$50,000) to get their business operations off the ground.

In fact, Hollon and his brother received the first SBA loan in the Rocky Mountain region.

With part of the money, they bought an old planing mill and began processing wood from the Laramie Peak area. By the mid-1950s, the Hollons had expanded to several communities and states within the region with operations ranging from cement blocks to wood products, adding construction companies and ready mix concrete businesses and selling drilling products to drilling companies during oil booms.

By the '70s, the companies had prospered through the expansions and the Hollons decided to expand once more. This time the expansion came in the form of laying tennis courts and pouring rubberized gymnasium floors with 3M products.

About the time his brother expanded into the gym floor business, Jerry decided it was time to get out and do something else. They sold four retail lumber yards and five construction companies in 1975 and Jerry went to work for the University.

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# C.E. "Jerry" Hollon, Recipient 1986 UW Medallion Service Award

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Hollon had been President of the UW Board of Trustees from 1969-72 and decided to continue his service to the University by raising money for UW through the office of Vice President of Development for the Foundation.

When he sold the businesses, Hollon set up a trust fund with several "tens of thousands of dollars" with the University receiving yearly benefits.

Currently, his title is coordinator of major gifts for the Foundation. Hollon explains his loyalty to the University and why he feels people should give by first saying "I think that you have to believe in things that you give to whether it's the Boy Scouts or your church or whatever the cause."

"The reason I give quite a bit is because I feel very strongly for the University of Wyoming. If it hadn't been for the University of Wyoming, I don't think I would have accomplished those things."

Hollon, who believes his position with the University is a cause and not a job, said when he solicits money for the University he must be prepared to answer three major questions: what does the University need the money for? how much does he expect the donor to contribute? and how is it going to benefit the donor?

He also believes in publishing the amounts that each person has donated because the person who gave however much he or she was able to give is proud he or she was able to give that much. He said the only ones who complain about printing the amount they gave are usually the ones who didn't give as much as they could have and are embarrassed.

"I've given a contribution book to someone who's only given \$5 and the first thing they do is look through the book to find their name," he explains. "The size of the gift is not as important as finally making the decision to give."

During his tenure as President of the UW Board of Trustees, Hollon was faced with some of the most difficult times

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in UW's history. There was the "Black 14" incident where Black football players wanted to protest against the Mormon beliefs during a BYU game; the "Flagpole" incident when students wanted the flag lowered to half-mast to mourn the shooting of students at Kent State University and the "Governor's Day" incident when students were protesting the governor's recognition of ROTC cadets on campus.

The Black 14 incident reportedly came about as Black students from other universities tried to make similar protests against what they perceived as "racists" beliefs on behalf of the Mormon church, which supports Brigham Young University.

The Black 14 wanted to wear black armbands during the football game and were encouraging White football players to join them. Football Coach Lloyd Eaton had a policy of not allowing his players to protest during demonstrations because "to do so distracts them from their purpose in being here — to get an education and play football. Because the majority of our players are C-average students, they cannot afford the time from their studies to participate in demonstrations."

According to Deborah Hardy's "Wyoming History: The First 100 Years 1886-1986," where a lengthy chapter on student rebellion highlights

the Black 14 incident, where the athletes probably messed up is when they showed up at Eaton's office to discuss the situation, they were already wearing the armbands.

A strict disciplinarian, Eaton saw the protest as a direct violation of his policy and he kicked all 14 players off the team for the remainder of the year.

Hollon was contacted immediately as meetings were frantically called with the Black 14, student leaders, professors, academic leaders and trustees.

Hollon remembers the academic leaders of the campus were supportive of the Blacks, who had sat in their offices all day discussing the situation.

"Several board members assembled on campus that evening to discuss what to do," Hollon said. "About 7 or 7:30, I went over to the theater where Coach Eaton and his football players were at the movie. I asked an usher to ask the coach to come out and talk with me. Initially, he refused but when I told him to tell him I was the president of the trustees, Coach Eaton came out of the movie in a big huff and said 'what the hell do you want?'"

"I told him I wanted to talk to him. I said 'I don't know what you think, but I think what you did was a damn good thing today. If that is the way you believe, then that was O.K.'"

Hollon said the trustees

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stayed up all night discussing the situation with different campus leaders until one of the professors on campus threatened to fight one of the trustees.

To this day, Hollon is convinced that after the Black 14 instigated the incident, other nationally known Black leaders were telling the football players what to do.

"I had the feeling the Black 14 were scared," he said. "They began the incident, but were later scared of the national leaders. The Black leaders of the nation were telling the kids what to do and if they didn't do it, they thought they would get killed."

The Black 14 were not allowed back on the football team but were later offered non-athletic scholarships. Nine of the 14 applied for financial aid for the spring semester of 1970, but only seven actually took classes. Several of the players went on to play professional football.

Repercussions from the incident have affected the athletic programs at UW, but no one knows to what extent.

"One of the vice presidents said 'the incident is going to set athletics back 10 years on this campus,'" Hollon said. "I thought, 'phoey.' But that's exactly what happened."

Despite what others may say about the incident, Hollon still believes the law suit by the Blacks following the incident is "one of the greatest things that ever happened to the State of Wyoming and the University. Because, by winning that case, we proved that the state and the University is not prejudiced."

Hollon said he took his position as President of the Board of Trustees seriously and would join other trustees in having dinner with students in cafeterias, fraternities and in the student union.

He said at an early age he adopted a philosophy of hard work and hard play. He also said that to become an effective leader, a person should lead people, not push them.