

## Belief in UW education drives Gullikson's service

By DEBRA BAKER BECK, *Alumnews* Editor

For many of us, having to ask someone for a contribution strikes great fear in our hearts.

Fortunately for the University of Wyoming, 1998 Medallion Service Award recipient Mary Thorson Gullikson (BS '58) isn't that type of person.

Gullikson is one of UW's most ardent supporters and advocates who is not afraid to lead major fund raising efforts.

"I have asked so many, many people for money over the years," Gullikson says, on behalf of UW and many other worthy organizations. "A lot of people have an aversion to asking people for money. I don't, really, because the things that I'm working on are projects that I believe in my heart are truly worthwhile projects. I am not asking for this money for me; I am asking for this good cause."

For the last several years, one of Gullikson's favorite causes has been her alma mater. She has contributed via service on the UW Alumni Association board (1988-1992), the Foundation Board (She was president from 1992-93.), and the UW Art Museum Board (including service as auction chair from 1994-95). Most recently, she has chaired the UW College of Health Sciences Advisory Board and its Strategic Planning Council. Her biggest goal of the moment: leading a massive capital campaign to give the College of Health Sciences a home. The \$15 million project includes renovation of the Old Biochemistry Building (formerly the Agriculture Building, built in 1924) as well as construction of a School of Nursing and a link between those facilities and the School of Pharmacy Building.

Leading a project of this magnitude is no easy task, but Mary's enthusiasm for this project is contagious. It's not "if," she says, but "when."

"We're going to take something old and make it new again," she says of the planned renovation. "We're going to give it a new life."

"I talk about this all the time," Gullikson says of her favorite project. "I know that people are getting sick of hearing me, nagging and nudging about it."

But that's okay with her, because foremost in Mary's mind is the improved learning environment the project will create for future health sciences students and faculty. Currently, classes, labs and department offices are scattered across campus in 10 locations, including the basements of other colleges. That's hardly an environment conducive to learning, Gullikson says.

"They deserve to be where they can be integrated in their teaching and in all the work that they do, both for learning and for efficiencies."

"Every person will use some kind of medical attention in their lifetime," Gullikson notes. "It behooves us to do our best for the education of our Wyoming students, who will be delivering our medical care."

She finds it particularly distressing that the college's dean sits above the campus police station, isolated from her faculty, staff and students.

"I have felt very, very strongly that the College of Health Sciences deserves to have a home," she says, noting that it is the only college that does not have a building of its own.

Gullikson is certain that reaching the project's fund raising goal is simply a matter of getting the word out to the right sources.

"There are people who are generous and who like a good project if they just know about it," she says.



Mary Gullikson

"Sometimes, it's a matter of getting the people with the ideas for the project together with the people who have the money and ideas to support the project." Gullikson has the ideas; she's looking for the second half of the equation.

### Vision for the Future

Gullikson's service to the College of Health Sciences extends beyond dollars and cents. While still on the Foundation board, she came up with the idea for the college's annual Vision Conference (now in its fifth year, scheduled for Sept. 18), which links industry leaders with faculty and others interested in providing the best quality education for future professionals.

"I thought it would be wonderful to bring together faculty with the legislators, the laypeople and the professional people," she says of her motivation for the conference. The multi-part goal: linking faculty with professionals to insure that students receive the most up-to-date education possible before graduation; updating legislators about that education; and informing laypeople, so that they can offer feedback and return to their communities as liaisons.

Little did she know that Dean Martha Williams had the same basic idea. Working with the dean on this and other projects has been one of the more pleasant parts of Gullikson's service to the college.

"You cannot escape her enthusiasm," she says of Williams. "She is a person who builds synergism."

### Rejoining the Family

Gullikson's re-entry into the University of Wyoming family came in 1988, when she won election

to the Alumni Association board. She calls the four years spent on that body "the regeneration of my affection for the university," because it brought her back into contact with old classmates and acquaintances and introduced her to a new group of friends.

She praises the board for its ability to generate energy and ideas, noting that many who serve are community activists who carry that tradition to their work with the university.

"There's such a 'can-do' attitude" on the association board, she says.

Gullikson found a similarly energizing environment when she joined the Foundation board in 1989. Her service on both boards opened up many personal opportunities and exposed her to a variety of experiences, from attending cultural performances to touring UW's world-class research facilities.

"The university connection has been a highlight in my life, as it surely is for others who are affiliated," she says.

The fact someone found her commitment worthy of the Medallion Service Award caught Gullikson by surprise.

"I was totally bowled over," she says, noting previous recipients like friends Ann Simpson and Peg Tobin. "I know that I am in very superior company."

"I would never have dreamed that I could have been in that category," she says. "It was the last thing I ever would have expected."

### Fulfilling Obligations

Gullikson views her contributions of time and money to UW as appropriate ways to return something to her native state. She says doing so is her obligation, as it is for alumni everywhere.

"It seems to me that all of us from Wyoming and in Wyoming have an obligation to give back to that state, particularly to our university," she says, noting that tuition has never come close to the cost of receiving a UW education.

The obligation to support the state and its educational institutions extends to people who move to Wyoming because they enjoy the lifestyle, the environment or simply the lack of an income tax, according to Gullikson. She says it's up to alumni to help point that out to newcomers.

"Every alum that we have in the state of Wyoming is serving some of these people," she says. "We all need to talk about this opportunity that we have," including the need to support the state's only university.

"It behooves us to provide this for our young people."

### Biographical Information

Mary and her husband, David, longtime residents of Loveland, Colo., have a large family, including four children: Anne (married to Ted Murguia, parents of Sophie and Ellie), Emily (married to Charles Hedrick, parents of Madeline), Gloria, and Donald (married to Erica Gullikson).

After graduating from Upton, Wyo., High School, Gullikson earned an AA from Colorado Woman's College before transferring to UW. She earned a BS

(Continued on page 25)



# Gullikson...

(Continued from page 8)

in home economics (emphasis on nutrition and education) from UW in 1958. She also served a dietetic internship at Highland Alameda County Hospital at Oakland, Calif., in 1960.

Mary worked in dietetics at Berkeley, Calif.; and at hospitals in Newcastle, Sundance, and Gillette, Wyo. She also recently served as executive director of DARE (Drug Abuse Resources and Education) in Loveland; and she is a one-third owner in the Thorson family business, Black Hills Bentonite Co., in Casper.

When the Gulliksons moved to Loveland and started a family, they decided that she would stay home and rear the children. As the youngsters got older, Mary began a volunteer saga that she now lovingly calls "my main job." Her first volunteer experiences included going door to door during