

Medallion Service Award Recipient: Lucille Dumbrill

By Suzanne Bopp
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Lucille Dumbrill's association with the University of Wyoming has been a close one, and it has been a long one. She was born in Lake Town, Utah (in the same bed her mother was born in, which she still has). The family moved to Laramie when she was in second grade so her father could take a position as the head of UW's Department of Zoology. Dumbrill and her brother were enrolled in the University's training school.

The memories of her earliest days on campus are still vivid. "When I was a little girl, on Saturday mornings my mother would send us up to the campus," she says. "We had metal roller skates - they're now in the museum here in Newcastle! We used to skate on that sidewalk from Old Main down to 9th Street. That was wonderful sidewalk." She remembers watching the commencement parades, with all the colored hoods, cross Prexy's Pasture, and going to UW's summer camp in the Medicine Bow Range, chasing butterflies with her net in hand.

When she graduated from high school, there was no question about where she would continue her education. "I didn't really think about anything else. I just walked across the street," she says.

She jumped into university life with both feet, participating in organizations of all kinds. "What is this you're going to join now?" her mother used to ask. Her memberships included Delta Delta Delta, the University Council of Religious Organizations (she was chairman), Sigma Xi, Phi Beta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, Mortar Board, Psi Chi, Spurs, and Iron Skull. She played in the University orchestra during college and even during high school, because they didn't have enough violins. "I was a warm body and I could make a noise and most of the time it was right," she says. Her name appeared in "Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities," which she says is what happened "if you were a student who participated in a lot of things."

In-between meetings, she studied hard. "I always thought you had to really work. Every teacher had so much to give and tell you. Those teachers made my life a different kind of experience."

When she started at UW, it was about the time the veterans were coming back from the War, so her classes



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were full of young men. "It was an interesting time. You didn't have to worry about being popular - all the girls were popular." In Dr. A.J. Dickman's French class was one of those veterans who was to be her future husband. "My name was Clark. His name was Dumbrill. Dr. Dickman seated us alphabetically."

She married Richard Dumbrill while they continued with school, she in mathematics, he in law. She earned a master's degree in 1951. "The discipline and training you get with mathematics, you learn how to approach a problem, no matter what kind of problem it is," she says. "That skill has served me well." Her degrees might have led her into a cutting-edge career. "Had I not gotten married, I had offers to go into a new field called computer science. They were looking for math majors."

After her husband took the bar, the family moved to Newcastle. Dumbrill was not immediately enthusiastic about it. "At one time I said, 'I don't care where we live, but we can't live in Newcastle.' But it is wonderful; we couldn't have found a place that was any nicer to live. It's a jewel in Wyoming, of which there are many."

Dumbrill didn't hesitate to jump into community life in the same way she had at UW, volunteering in many areas for her county, her state and the country. "I guess I must have energy,"

she says, by way of explanation. She was on the Northern Wyoming Mental Health Center Board from its inception, having been appointed by the Weston County Commissioners, and served for 13 years. She served on the Weston County Hospital Building committee; the Weston County Museum District Board; the Wyoming State Board, Library, Archives, and Historical; and was president of the Wyoming State Historical Society.

Her husband was the one who got her interested in history, and they were both active in the Historical Society. "History started to be a main focus partly because it was something we could do together," she says. Her husband, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease 14 years ago, now lives in a nursing home in Gillette; she remains involved in his care.

Her interest in history led to her 1988 appointment by President Reagan to the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Her husband had retired from law practice by then, and he accompanied her over four years of meetings in Washington, D.C. and travel all over the U.S., helping to preserve national treasures.

Some of the more controversial preservation problems they confronted included the use of sacred burial

grounds of the Cherokee Nation for a gambling casino in Alabama, and the establishment of the Seneca Falls Women's Center in Seneca Falls, NY. It was the site of the first women's meeting in the world, which gave rise to the suffrage movement. "Because I was from Wyoming, I was sent to meet people about this, because I was from the Equality State," Dumbrill says. "I was sure my experience at the University of Wyoming helped me with that; I felt very comfortable in that atmosphere because I'd had experience with so many brilliant, accomplished people at UW."

Today she's an advisor for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which promotes preservation in general. She represented the Trust in Scotland, where she evaluated a historical tour and greeted preservationists there. Dumbrill loves to travel and also visited Africa recently. "I'd thought of going to Africa because my mother always wanted to go to Africa," she says. "When I was there, I thought of her every day." She traveled in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa. "I felt like I had been transported into a fairy tale. It was a mind-expanding experience."

Dumbrill finds time to continue her involvement with UW in various ways. "I'm always glad to give something back when I get a chance," she says. She's on the Board of Visitors from the College of A&S and the Board of Advisors for the American Heritage Center. She's a patron of the Art Museum and served on the Alumni Board for six years.

She is also the treasurer of the Wyoming Historical Foundation and chairman of several art projects that have raised more than \$200,000 for the Foundation: one a Paulley print, part of the income of which goes to the American Heritage Center, and one a painting of the Tetons by Schweiring, signed by all the living Wyoming governors.

Involvement with UW is truly a family tradition for Dumbrill. The Clark Fund, which supports scholarships and student research projects, was established primarily by Dumbrill's mother; her father helped establish the pre-medicine program. As for the next generation, no doubt among many of her 10 grandchildren are future UW alums - right now, somewhere around 30 people in her immediate family are alums or are currently attending UW. "It's a big part of my family," she says, "and it's been a big part of my life."