Gerald E. "Jerry" Schuman Medallion Service Award

By: Julianne Couch
Alumni News Editor

FACTS

EDUCATION: B.S., Agriculture, UW ’66
M.S., Soil Science, UNL ’66.
Ph.D., Agronomy, major in Soil Science, University of Nebraska-Lincoln ’74.

OCCUPATION: Soil Scientist, retired, Adjunct UW faculty, active

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: W.R.
Chapline Award, Society for Range Management; Plass Award, American Society for Mining and Reclamation; Sustained Lifetime Achievement Award, Society for Range Management; Fellow Award, Soil Science Society of America, Soil and Water Conservation Society, American Society of Agronomy and Society for Range Management.

BEST KNOWN FOR: Work on mine land reclamation and carbon sequestration research; mentoring students.

FAMILY: Wife Joann, Lake wife Mabel, married for nearly 40 years prior to her death in 2004; son, William and daughter, Kara.

Hobbies: Following the Wyoming Cowboys! Hunting, fishing and traveling, especially foreign travel.

Most Wyomingites are aware that our state is a key player in the energy industry. We know what happens to the materials that are mined in Wyoming. However, many of us give little thought to what happens to that land after the mining operation has moved on. Gerald "Jerry" Schuman is known as a leading international society on mined land reclamation and carbon sequestration. He has helped spread that knowledge to others throughout his service to UW.

Schuman has devoted a large portion of his career as a soil scientist to the problem of restoring mined lands to their previous condition. His research led to the development of a reclamation technology that has been used to rezone more than 14,000 acres of former bentonite mined land.

Another emphasis of Schuman's research looked at intersecting yellow-flowering alfalfa into rangelands for enhanced forage production, improved forage quality, and enhanced sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide into the soil. Additional research emphasis is the use of small grain stubble mulches rather that straw or hay mulch to aid in the establishment of the permanent plant community on the restored land.

Schuman’s research career has also emphasized carbon sequestration. He was appointed by Gov. Jim Geringer and then by Gov. Dave Freudenthal to serve on the Wyoming Carbon Storage committee, representing rangeland soil research in Wyoming. The primary objective was to establish carbon as a commodity on the Chicago Climate Exchange, a goal they reached.

Schuman was born in Sheridan, Wyo. He attended school for 12 years in the small town of Clearmont. "There were five of us who graduated together, and we all went on to college," he said. He entered UW in 1962 and earned his degree in Soil Science. He worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) in Reno, Nev. From there his work with the ARS took him to Lincoln, Neb. After earning his Ph.D. there he intended to go back to Sheridan to work the farm.

"Two of my brothers went to the farm, and my father decided there wasn’t room for all of us," he said.

In 1975, Schuman began leading a research program in mined land reclamation and soil and water conservation with ARS in Cheyenne. He was research leader and director of the High Plains Grasslands Research Station/Rangeland Resources Research Unit from 1976 to 1990. He returned to full-time research in 1999. He retired in 2005 but continues as an adjunct professor in soil science at UW.

Several UW institutions have benefited from Schuman’s involvement. He has served as an adjunct professor in the Department of Renewable Resources, participating in chairing/ co-chairing and Ph.D. graduate committees for more than 30 students and helping younger colleagues develop their own research funding. He has served on countless search committees and was one of the coordinators to solicit contributors to endow the Dr. Lee Painter Memorial Scholarship. He serves on the steering committee for the Abandoned Coal Mine Land Research Program administered by the UW Office of Research. He has given numerous research seminars on the topics of mined land reclamation and carbon sequestration in several UW departments. He has assisted the School of Environmental and Natural Resources with a workshop addressing protocol and methodology for assessing coal bed methane production water management to prevent land/soil degradation. He has been a member of the UW Alumni Association since 1966 and is a member of Gamma Sigma Delta and Sigma Xi, both honorary fraternities.

Schuman was named an Outstanding Alumnus of the College of Agriculture in 2000. His nominators for that award included Tom Turrent, professor and department head of UW’s Department of Renewable Resources. “Given the large areas of land impacted by mining in Wyoming, we are lucky to have someone with Dr. Schuman’s skills and drive working to creatively meet these needs. Dr. Schuman loves Wyoming and its people; I know he gets a great personal reward from knowing that he is a positive force in helping restore beauty and function to Wyoming landscapes after the minerals have been extracted.”

Schuman was recently recognized by a landowner family from northwestern South Dakota where he has carried out research for several years. The establishment of the Jerry Schuman/Bud Smith Rangeland Improvement Graduate Student award will help students at UW’s Department of Renewable Resources.

Steve Horn, former dean and professor in Animal Science, speaks of Schuman’s dedication to UW. “Jerry always finds the time to assist his alma mates. He raises money for undergraduate student scholarships and never turns down an opportunity to share his work and experiences with UW students.”

As an example of this generosity, Schuman is in the process of establishing a soil science scholarship that will assist graduate students travel to technical meetings here and abroad. It should be funded by 2010, he said.

Stephen E. Williams, former dean of the graduate school, recalls a personal story about a trip to visit surface mines in Mongolia with Schuman. “We had traveled by very rough roads 140 miles west of Ulaanshar to the Zaaner Gold Mines to view several reclamation trials in the area. When we arrived, we discovered that we did not have a shovel, but still we needed to sample plant roots and some soils. Jerry proceeded to find a rock that he could use for digging. With a lot of effort and much persistence he took soil samples using this Stone Age tool. And there he was, like a prehistoric being, wrenching..."
Marcia Lyn Bradley Dale
Distinguished Alumna

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and is editor of a nursing journal.
With all Dale's professional accomplishments it is easy to overlook her days at UW as a student. She was involved with SPURS and Big Sisters. She was district president of the Wyoming Association for Student Nurses in 1957 and was chosen for Associated Women Students Board campus leaders conference in 1958. Also in 1958 she received the Honor Book for "superior work in nursing." In 1960 she received the Laxemie Medical Group Nursing Prize of $100 at Exercises for Presentation of Nursing Pins.

"Even though attending UW was not my first choice of a university at the time, receiving several scholarships forced the issue with my parents," Dale recalls. Amelia Leino, the dean of the School of Nursing at that time, convinced us that earning a Bachelor of Science degree in nursing would prepare us for the future better than having a diploma in nursing from a hospital school. Few universities were offering degrees in nursing but Amelia Leino and the University of Wyoming were one of the schools leading the way. In retrospect, I know that the university gave me the start of a fulfilled career in nursing."

Dale said being nominated for Distinguished Alumna was "flattering, but I didn't think I'd have a chance." But being nominated was "lovely," she said, "especially because it was initiated by a person outside the field of nursing."}

Duane Woodard
Distinguished Alumnus

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heowed himself to the highest level of ethics. Regardless of the dominant party at the time, Attorney General Duane Woodard measured all his decisions by the highest standard of ethics and legal correctness.

Ann Tolleson, who has served in various volunteer roles at UW with Woodard, said, "His distinguished career as a State Legislator, lawyer, and Attorney General in Colorado should be of great pride to the University of Wyoming. The fact that he has been acknowledged for his work in contributions to progress in environmental issues in those capacities is a testament to his academic preparation at UW."

Another life long friend, UW Professor Emeritus John L. Allen, speaks of the man he refered to as Woody. "It is important to note that what Woody has done over the course of a long and distinguished career - his work with others less fortunate, his commitment to public service, his willingness to sacrifice his own personal ambition for the public good - was shaped by a great institution: the University of Wyoming."

Woodard recalls the first time he was aware of the award. "That was during the fall of 1959, halftime at a UW football game - a moment I clearly recall. The award was presented to John Bugas, of the Ford Motor Company. As a newly enrolled freshman at UW I was struck by the magnitude of the recipient's career. I knew this recognition was something important as I watched the ceremony, but it never crossed my mind that someday I might also be so honored," he said.

"I fully understand the importance of the UW Distinguished Alumni recognition and the honor it surely held for those exemplary UW graduates who came before. It is no less important for me, now finding myself in the same enviable position. This is a proud moment for me and my family and I want to thank the UW Alumni Association for making this the special day it is."

Gerald E. "Jerry" Schuman
Medallion Service Award

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the soil from the ground with his primitive tool, loving every minute of it.

George F. Vance, Distinguished Professor of Energy and the
Environment at UW, was Schuman's nominator for this award. "Dr. Schuman's research and service contributions to Wyoming, the region and national/international efforts are truly impressive. He has continually provided high quality, practical research for the land manager that addresses contemporary issues, while concurrently advancing the state of knowledge in soil carbon and nitrogen recycling," he said.

Schuman attributes his success and ability to help others with his work in large part to his academic preparation at UW. "I went to two other large universities but I believe my UW education prepared me the best for what I went on to do."

In spite of his professional and personal accomplishments, Schuman said he was "a little overwhelmed" when he received a letter from the Alumni Association. "I got a certified letter and thought now what? When I look at the list of others who've received the award I'm not sure what I did to deserve it."

Perhaps one answer to this question can be found in his feelings about working with students. "It makes you feel good to see those young people you had when they were in their 20s and they're out there working and keeping in touch with you because they enjoyed working with you. Advisors get a lot of credit because they bring in the money, but all the work I did with students and colleagues was truly a team effort."