

# Peter M. Johnson and Paula Green Johnson, UW Medallion Service Award Recipients



When Peter M. Johnson (B.S. '72) and Paula Green Johnson (B.S. '72) launched the Peter M. and Paula Green Johnson Career Center at the University of Wyoming College of Business, they were trying to solve a basic problem: how to help students get jobs in the areas they'd trained for at UW. Their answer to this fundamental question is a key reason they are co-recipients of the UW Medallion Service Award for 2014.

Peter Johnson explains the idea of the center started in 2004, when he served as the first executive in residence at the college. He'd been asked to draw on his expertise as president of Sinclair Oil Corp.'s oil division to speak to students. He taught several sessions one

day in April, where he expected most senior-level students he was addressing to have already obtained jobs they'd commence upon graduation. "I prepared my thoughts primarily around how you succeeded in a career, not how you get a career," he says. So Johnson was surprised when he asked students how many had secured their first professional jobs and almost no hands went up. Of the few who did raise their hands, the typical explanation was that they were returning to their home towns to work at the family business, Johnson recalls.

That was not good enough, he says. "If students are going to college in a program that prepares them for a specific career, like engineering, law, business, etc., UW hasn't finished the job until they provide adequate assistance finding a job in that field."

In 2007 the couple donated \$1 million to endow the Peter M. and Paula Green Johnson Career Center at the UW College of Business. The center assists business students with comprehensive career planning services that start at the beginning of a student's college journey.

Paula Green Johnson also shares a deep passion for the journey of college students, but comes at it from a slightly different angle. She graduated from UW with a degree in speech pathology and audiology. She wound up working in a different field, but now dedicates her energy to volunteer service with numerous organizations. She is particularly interested in empowering women and girls, and working for racial justice.

She says she was raised to believe she could accomplish anything in life she wanted. Then she learned that the world "works differently." She recalls a time when women weren't admitted into Ivy League schools, but now they are. "On the international scene, so many women can't have an education," she says. "In Nigeria right now, they are getting kidnapped if they try."

Both Peter Johnson and Paula Green Johnson are passionate about giving back to UW. She says, "We say to our scholarship recipients, 'You get this funding. What I expect from you, when you are at our station in life, is that it'll be your turn to give back.'"

