

THE WYOMING



# Alumnews

November-December, 1956

Honor  
Award  
Recipient

H  
O  
L  
L  
O  
N

&

M  
C  
R  
A  
K  
E  
N



# McCraken Gets Honor Award

WINNER of this year's honor alumni award was Wyoming's own Tracy S. McCracken, BA '17. Mr. McCracken accepted the handsome Shaeffer desk pen set from C. E. "Jerry" Hollon, immediate past president of the Alumni Association at impressive ceremonies during half-time intermission at the Homecoming football game.

Perhaps no man in Wyoming has risen from such a modest start to such a place of influence in the state as Mr. McCracken. The son of a widowed mother, he held a variety of part-time jobs during his early youth and worked his way through the University as a reporter on the Laramie Boomerang. After he graduated from school and served his time in World War I, he returned to Wyoming to become manager of the Boomerang, which he soon put in the black for the first time in many years.

Having an early interest in politics, which has increased over the years, Mr. McCracken resigned from the Boomerang on Jan. 1, 1923, to become secretary to Governor William B. Ross. In 1924 he went on to become secretary to Senator Kendrick in Washington, D. C.

He returned to his newspaper career in 1926 when influential Democrats, among them Joseph C. O'Mahoney, then a Cheyenne lawyer, asked Mr. Mc-

Cracken to take over the management of the Wyoming Eagle and make it a spokesman for the Democratic party. McCracken's reply was that he would not manage the paper, but that he would buy it and that its editorial columns would be Democratic, but that its news columns would be completely factual and objective.

In 1933 he converted the Eagle to a daily and was soon running the long-entrenched Cheyenne Tribune such stiff competition, that the owners of the Tribune approached Mr. McCracken with a proposition to consolidate the two papers with the Tribune owners taking the majority of the stock in the two papers. McCracken turned this proposition down, but in a few years was able to effect the consolidation on his own terms—that his paper hold the controlling stock.

While these transactions were going on Mr. McCracken also acquired ownership of the Gillette paper, and so was on his way toward building up the newspaper chain which now includes the two dailies in Cheyenne, the two in Laramie, and dailies in Worland, Rawlins, and Rock Springs. Papers in Worland and Rock Springs were weeklies when he bought them but have since been converted to dailies.

He has since added radio and television stations to his chain of mass information media in the state.

The McCracken family is 100 per cent University alumni, since Mrs. McCracken, the former Lillian Davis, graduated in 1916, and their two sons, Robert and William have both attended the University. In addition, Mrs. Robert McCracken (Patricia Stoddard) also graduated.

The University has no stronger booster than Mr. McCracken, since he and Mrs. McCracken are donors of a \$10,000 endowment which provides two scholarships each year for deserving students, and Mr. McCracken has served on the Board of Trustees for many years, a large number of those years as vice-president.

His sponsorship of the Treagle train which brings as his guests to the campus a large number of notables once a year to a football game is another one of his ways of boosting the University. The train this year came on Homecoming and brought a large group of loyal fans to the game and later Homecoming events.

Maintaining his interest and influence in politics, Mr. McCracken has served since 1942 as Wyoming Democratic National Committeeman, but two of his papers are Republican, two are independent, and the other three are Democratic.

Since receiving the honor alumni award Mr. McCracken has expressed his appreciation at receiving the award.

## Wyoming Institutions of Higher Learning

By C. E. "JERRY" HOLLON—Past President, Alumni Association

*This is the third article in a series pertaining to institutions of higher learning in Wyoming.*

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the University of Wyoming Alumni Association believes the junior colleges of the state are an asset to higher education and the State University.

Junior colleges have two major purposes—to enable a larger percentage of students to secure two more years of academic training than they would if local two-year courses were not available; and to prepare high school graduates for entrance into a four-year college after their junior college years.

In 1947, the President's Commission on Higher Education stated that 49 per cent of the college-age population was capable of doing two years of college

work and that 32 per cent had the ability to do four years of college work. But, of the pupils who graduate from high schools annually who rank in the upper one-fourth of their class and are capable of doing college work only one-half that number go to college. Many of the number who do not go on to higher education fail to do so for financial reasons. This would seem to indicate a definite place for junior colleges in our system of higher education.

It is believed distance and to a greater degree cost are the two factors that influence students thinking of attending college away from home. Many financially handicapped students are able to attend college when they can stay at home, avoid the added expenses of

board and room, plus travelling costs. After a student has attended college two years and has learned that he can make the grade, in many cases he is then willing to make the additional effort to raise the money to finish his college career at a distant school.

For those students who have the capability or desire to attend only the junior college, these community schools offer terminal courses in specific occupational training, such as secretarial science and vocational agriculture. These students definitely benefit occupationally by being able to train for work in which they are interested.

A further beneficial result of community junior colleges is the cultural advantages offered to both the com-

(Continued on Page 9)