

Distinguished Alums Named

The University of Wyoming Distinguished Alumni awards for 1978 will be presented to L. G. Christofferson, Dean Conger, Andrew Decora and Albert McCollough during the Homecoming festivities on October 7. The 1978 awards mark the 25th anniversary of UW's Distinguished Alumni program.

During his 39-year service with Chicago Bridge and Iron, L.G. Christofferson held many important positions. As manager of the company's world-wide operations, he supervised as many as 10 thousand people at one time.

"Those people were our construction and engineering crews," he said. "We had 250 construction jobs all over the world. Each crew had 10 to 500 people per crew."



L.G. Christofferson BS '37

Construction sites were located around the world. According to Christofferson they included Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Wake Island, Alaska, Saudi Arabia and Greece.

"It was a world-wide operation," he said. "It had to be very fluid. Everyday we had a job finished with another one to take its place."

"Our biggest problem was getting confident, trained people. We depended on their ingenuity to get the job done," he explained. "We tried for safety and economical construction at all times, and we still managed to get a dividend to stockholders every year."

Busy as he was in Chicago, after his retirement Christofferson still fills his days at home in Jackson Hole. His hobbies include golf, hunting, horseback riding and working in his home workshop.

"I've got a couple of Quarterhorses that I bought when we moved from Chicago," he said. "They're just for riding and hunting. I hunt elk, deer, antelope and moose. Most of my hunting is done in Jackson."

Christofferson said he wasn't as concerned with getting an animal as he was in getting out and seeing the area for a few days.

During his UW college days, he played football when he wasn't studying or working. He was encouraged to play football by his friends and eventually played on the first string varsity team.

Christofferson and his wife spend the cold season in their winter home in Houston.



Dean D. Conger BS '50

As Assistant Director of Photography for National Geographic Magazine, Dean D. Conger has experienced what many would choose not to even dream about.

"There have been many special occasions," he remembered. "While we were in the Phillipines we ate rat and snake. If you work with people and they offer their best hospitality, it's an insult to refuse."

Conger has done articles from Project Mercury to Chartres Cathedral in France to Thailand. "This job is good and bad," he said. "I've seen a lot of the world and its people, but it has meant being away from home. I've missed the highlights and the lows of my family."

Of the problems Conger has encountered, weather has presented the most frequent. "Sometimes it makes a picture, but that isn't always the case," he said. "When I was doing a piece on Mount Fiji I waited ten days for a clear day. When the weather cleared, I had my pictures in ten minutes. That's the difference in Geographic photography. You don't just fly in, take a few snap shots then fly out."

Conger taught himself photography. Before attending UW, he received a lot of newspaper experience in Casper. While in college, he continued his work. "Not many people were doing photography in the 40's," he said. "I worked for the news service as well as the Yearbook and Branding Iron."

As a graduate of UW, Conger became a photographer for the Denver Post. During his nine-year career as a newspaper photographer, he was named Newspaper Photographer of the Year on



Andrew W. Decora BS '50
MS '57 PhD '62

three separate occasions. Conger said those awards attracted Geographic's attention.

He has continued to receive awards since his career with National Geographic began in 1960. Among his recent awards is the Nikon World Understanding Award in 1977. In April 1978, he was presented a Citation of Excellence from the Overseas Press Club in photography for the book "Journey Across Russia: The Soviet Union Today," published August, 1977.

In his spare time, he enjoys woodworking, skiing, and bicycling. He also has recently spent time preparing multi-media presentations and giving speeches about photography and the Soviet Union.

Pictures of mining and gasification plants of Wyoming decorated Andrew W. Decora's large office. Director of the U.S. Department of Energy's Laramie branch, he has been involved in energy research since 1948.

Dr. Decora received a special commendation for work in prototype oil shale leasing from Interior Secretary Rogers C. Morton. He is internationally recognized for leadership in in-site development of coal, oil shale and tar sands technology.

Decora has spent time helping service organizations such as Rotary International and Salvation Army. He views his work at the Laramie Energy Technology Center as a public service also. "As a past Rock Springs resident, I saw what can happen to a community with energy resources," he said. "Wyoming is playing an increasingly important role in energy. With land reclamation, there is no reason not to mine for what we need and



Albert W. McCollough BS '37

still be able to use the land later. Reclaimed lands from mining don't look exactly the same, but they are still attractive and can be used for things like farming and ranching."

Not only does Decora believe in Wyoming's energy future, but he is also loyal to its University. He believes definite advantages came from his education at UW, where he received his B.S. (1950), MS. (1957), and Ph. D. (1962) degrees in Chemistry.

"People always come out feeling inferior because of the comparisons people make to fancier sounding schools," he said. "But I don't think I could have gotten a finer education for my field anywhere else."

In his spare time, Decora is involved in hobbies that "push skills forward." Currently he is working on his instrument rating and commercial pilot license. He and his wife, Wanda, have two children, Marla and Ralph.

Albert W. McCollough has played trumpet for an amateur jazz group, been a long-time railroad fan, and amateur photographer and bird watcher. He has also been General Editor of Newsweek Magazine since the mid 1960's.

McCollough, a UW graduate of 1937, began his journalistic career working for the Branding Iron. While reporting for the BI, he received the Rocky Mountain Interscholastic Press Association Award for outstanding reporting.

"I can't honestly remember what that award was for," he said. "It may have been for a story I did on Fire Prevention Week. The Fire Inspector discovered the water valves in Old Main couldn't be turned on. That story, it may have been a series, caused quite an uproar in the Administration."

McCollough first began work for Newsweek in 1961. "A colleague of mine from my UPS days was working for Newsweek when they came up with an opening on the copy desk," he explained. "He contacted me to see if I was interested."

Following a favorable interview, McCollough spent a trial period at the magazine while vacationing from United Press. Five years after he was hired, he became General Editor and Chief of the Copy Desk.

McCollough has most recently published articles for toy and train collectors' magazines. Response to a long article concerning the history of the Buddy "L" Toy Company prompted his current work on a book.

The toys, according to McCollough, were large enough for an adult to stand on and small children could coast on them. "Most of the toys worked," he said. "You could even mix real cement in the cement mixers. They had trouble in the Depression, though, and later reduced and cheapened their toys."

McCollough is a member of the Train Collectors Association, a group of antique toy train collectors. He also belongs to the Toy Train Operating Society and has moderate-sized collections of old trains and toys.

He has also been a Library Trustee in East Meadow and Nassau County, New York. He served two terms as president of the board in East Meadow from 1967-77 and was vice president of the Nassau County system in 1977.

Snorkeling, flying and amateur photography are a few of his other interests. He and his wife have two daughters, Marion and Kimberly.