

# Distinguished Alumni

## Schutte credited with building renowned technical college



By Marty C. Padilla  
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He is responsible for building one of the most prestigious technical colleges in the country that excels not only in excellence but in reputation. For Michael K. Schutte, BS '63, and 1989 Distinguished Alumnus, building Wyoming Technical Institute to the caliber it is today was but one achievement in a most distinguished career of entrepreneurial endeavors.

As one of nine children growing up in Greybull, Wyoming, Schutte recalled the effort his family made to share what they had with others. He not only continued the family tradition of giving, but he has made it possible for hundreds and possibly thousands of students to attend the University as a result of his philanthropic efforts, contributing a \$1 million life insurance endowment to the Centennial Campaign. Half of Schutte's gift will go to the Cowboy Joe Club for endowed athletic scholarships and special projects. The remaining will endow Commerce and Industry and general University Scholarships.

This major gift is but one of many similar gestures that Schutte has put forth at UW, spinning off of the basic belief "giving back a little of what you receive," a lesson taught by his father. "You do receive something back in one form or another," Schutte said.

He rose to Valedictorian of his high school class of 1959 and later, as a UW Commerce and Industry major, was a proven student athlete and later a successful businessman. "I was fortunate enough to be an athlete and was offered a scholarship to attend UW," he said. "Without that scholarship I would not have been able to go to college," he added.

"The University took a chance on me, and I appreciate that. My athletic career on that field taught me some of the most important things about life," he said. "Athletics taught me that you have to be willing to make that effort, and you have to make more effort than the next person. Particularly if you lack in some abilities, you have to make up for those people who have the natural abilities," Schutte said.

"Playing football for Wyoming was a very unique thing because we are the only show in town," Schutte said. "When you play for Wyoming you get to meet the people. When I came back to Wyoming, people remembered me from my days at the University and I had some credibility with them. It's a special feeling—you meet people and they remember you," he said.

Immediately following college Schutte worked as an accountant for the U.S. Government two years prior to pursuing a sales career. Not long after entering sales Schutte began representing the Western Technical College in Denver as a representative and later as director of sales and marketing.

Schutte moved back to Laramie in 1971 to join the Wyoming Technical Institute (WTI) as admissions director. One year later he achieved a monumental student recruitment goal and was given a share of the school. By 1978 he was the sole owner of WTI. The college would eventually go from 9,000 square feet and 60 students to 150,000 square feet and 1,400 students each year. With its own campus north of Laramie, WTI began a primary emphasis on cutting edge instruction in automotive and diesel technologies. The school is the only one in the nation whose graduates are officially recognized by Mercedes-Benz of North America, Inc.

"After surrounding myself with tremendous people," Schutte said, "we made all of our decisions based on what was best for the students—the bottom line just seemed to happen."

The outstanding success of WTI under the leadership of Schutte has been one of the leading stories in Wyoming business over the last decade.

On January 1, 1986, WTI was purchased by MacMillan Publishing,

a Fortune "500" Company headquartered in New York City. Schutte, however, remains as Chief Executive Officer at the school until the end of this year.

Currently, Schutte serves as a UW Trustee and maintains his permanent residence in Laramie. He has a second home in San Diego. Right now he says he'll take a year off and contemplate what he intends doing for the rest of his life. "Or at least the next five or ten years," he says with a smile, "I've kept my options 'completely open.'"

Building WTI as the leading automotive and diesel training center in the U.S. was not the only thing that Schutte has contributed to Wyoming. He is co-founder and was the first president of the Cowboy Joe Club and still serves on the Board. He has been active in the Laramie community, having served as president of the Laramie Chamber of Commerce, the Laramie Quarterback Club, Laramie Youth Baseball and the Laramie Country Club.

On a statewide basis, Schutte was appointed by the Governor and

served on both the State Advisory Council for Vocational Education and the Wyoming Job Training Coordinating Council.

Nationally, Schutte has served in many capacities for the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools and has given many seminars around the country.

He was named "Wyoming's Businessman of the Year" in 1986 by the State Association of Realtors.

In March 1987 he was appointed as a Trustee of the University.

He and his wife Karen have four sons. Schutte will also be recognized with the Cowboy Joe Club's 1989 "White Hat Award" in September.

One nominator writes: "Mike has worked hard and earned every bit of success on his own. He has shown so many what pride in yourself and job can do. He most importantly has done all of this in Wyoming. His success happened in Wyoming, it is flourishing in Wyoming and it will stay in Wyoming. That is a big tribute to not only the state, but to the University where he graduated."

