UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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UW recognizes four outstanding alums during Homecoming 1991

Board finds no violation

UW News Service — A UW Civil Rights Review Board ruled last month that the director and associate director of the UW Student Educational Opportunity (SEO) office did not discriminate or retaliate against the former Indian Education Office (IEO) director when she was terminated in May.

Former IEO Director Roberta Wilson had filed charges of discrimination with the UW Employment Practices Office, alleging that SEO Director Fuji Adachi and SEO Associate Director Dolores Cardona had terminated her because of her tribal affiliation. According to Adachi, Wilson was terminated because she failed to meet the conditions associated with her one-year probation, a requirement for all UW staff employees.

"All along, our concern has been to make sure that the Indian Education Office was operated efficiently and effectively in the best interests of the Indian students," according to Associate Provost Jim Hurst.

According to Employment Practices Officer Jesse Vialpando, Wilson’s complaint was given top priority in his office.

In addition to her allegations of discrimination, Wilson claimed that SEO had mismanaged IEO funds.

Adachi responded, saying that those allegations were unfounded.

In late May, at the request of SEO, an independent accountant reviewed IEO financial statements and documents for the years 1986-91. Richard Ortiz, an enrolled Arapahoe and director of the Office of the Wind River Tax Commission for the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribes, found no "fraud, mismanagement of funds, embezzlement, theft and commingling of funds."

Additionally, on July 12, Adachi formally requested that the U.S. Department of Education conduct a financial and program audit of IEO's Project NATIVE.

Hurst says that he hopes the board’s finding, the recent financial review and the requested federal audit will restore confidence in the Indian Education Office.

"Ever since we founded the IEO, with the help of the Arapahoe and Shoshone tribes, IEO and the management team in SEO have enjoyed the trust and the confidence of tribal leaders and students," Hurst says. "Recent allegations have raised some concerns among some of the Arapahoe and Shoshone people. I sincerely hope that today’s finding starts a genuine healing process on the reservation and on our campus, so that we can make the Indian Education Office even stronger and more responsive to the educational needs of UW’s Indian students."

Hodgson named research VP

Derek Hodgson has been selected UW vice president for research.

Hodgson is a professor of chemistry and has served as UW’s interim vice president for research since July 1, 1990. During that time, the university received a record $26,013,040 in external grants and contracts in support of research and other projects.

Hodgson was one of three finalists for the position identified during a national search. He replaces Ralph DeVries, who was vice president from 1985 until his resignation last July.

New HS dean hired

UW News Service — Martha Williams is the new dean of the UW College of Health Sciences, effective Aug. 27.

Williams comes to UW from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was School of Social Work dean since 1981. She takes over from Philip Carafello, dean since 1986, who retired effective Sept. 3.

"I am looking forward to joining the UW faculty and serving as dean of health sciences," Williams says. "My first visit to the campus convinced me that I had found the perfect academic environment. Also, Wyoming is a beautiful state with a quality of life that is very appealing and special."

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Distinguished Alumni

Kester's engineering influence felt at sites across West

When winter weather closed down the crew's work for the season, Kester decided he would work for himself. He quit Kiewit and became a partner in the new Flora Construction Corp. The firm was based out of Denver; but Kester operated from his Cheyenne home, testing and building jobs in Wyoming. The first summer, he oversaw construction of a substation at Medicine Bow, a bridge across the Wind River near Dubois, and an irrigation diversion dam on the Tongue River north of Sheridan.

Kester and Francher purchased Flora, moved the company to Wyoming and renamed it Eagle Construction Corp. in 1951. Their first major job was completing the Boysen Dam project Flora started. That job went well and returned a good profit. Eagle's owners felt secure about the future.

"We were beginning to feel we would be successful contractors," Kester says in a 1989 autobiography.

Eagle's affiliation with the Grand Coulee Dam project lasted 12 years. Five of those involved installing the turbines, the largest hydro-electric units in the world, according to Kester. Installing the massive units was no small task: 825-megawatt units generated more than 1 million horsepower per wheel. Each wheel weighed 500 tons; each shaft measured 62 feet in length and 11 feet in diameter; the rotor had a 62-foot diameter.

Eagle Construction employees worked on most of the dams on the Missouri, Colorado and Columbia rivers. They also played a part in nearly all Bureau of Reclamation projects in Wyoming and several in Colorado, according to Kester.

Owning a business was hard work, but worth the effort, he says. Kester finds a great deal of satisfaction in building a project from beginning to end. Accomplishing that requires quality people, as well as the right resources to get the job done. Coordinating 300-500 workers challenged Kester, but "I think the satisfaction outweighs the frustration, by far."

Though Kester is officially "retired," he is far from idle. He maintains partial interest in another company, Loveland Ready-Mix, and he serves as a consulting engineer for several firms in the hydroelectric industry.

World War II

Kester served in the 35th Infantry of the Third Army (led by Gen. George Patton). His division entered France over Omaha Beach in 1942. They arrived at Orleans in mid-August. Kester's duty was to serve as public works officer for the city and province. He served in similar capacities in Belgium and Manheim, Germany. A lot of his time was spent building and repairing bridges, repairing railroads and public utilities. Kester received a war medal from the Belgian government for his work in one country.

Much of his work in Manheim involved reconstructing a war-torn city. Before the war, Manheim was a bustling metropolis of more than 400,000. Following the war, 95 percent of the city was destroyed, and only 40,000 people remained.

Long Days at UW

Kester enrolled at UW five years after graduating from high school in Johnson County, Wyo. He spent the years between 1931 and 1936 on the family farm and "did a little bit of everything, just to get by." By 1936, however, Kester decided to try something different. That's when he got a job and moved to Laramie.

Balancing work and school created some long days.

"I was forever studying and forever short of sleep," Kester says. Still, he found time to serve on the Reserve Officers Training Corps rifle team; and

Dreams of flight became reality for Witzenburger

A boyhood dream of becoming a military pilot translated into a distinguished 30-year military career for Col. Ed Witzenburger, a 1941 Distinguished Alumnus from Rancho Mirage, Calif., saw action in World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam as a fighter pilot. He realized his dream while enrolled in UW's inaugural Civilian Pilot Training (CPT) program.

A track star at Brooklyn Technical High School, Witzenburger had an athletic scholarship offer from Syracuse University. But he opted for the wide-open spaces of Wyoming in 1938, even though it was a far cry from his urban roots.

Three major factors influenced his decision — first, glowing reports of two former teammates who had been at Wyoming; second, the low cost of UW's tuition; and third, the institution's Reserve Officers' Training Corps program. Moving away from New York also held some appeal for the young Witzenburger.

"The idea of going a long way from home was very attractive," he admits.

ROTC prepared him for entry into the Army Air Force Flying Cadet Training Program. In fact, high recommendations from LTC G M. Halloran (head of UW ROTC) at the time were instrumental in Witzenburger's appointment to the program. Witzenburger earned his pilot's license while at UW and started advance training prior to entering the Army Air Corps.

UW Experience "Wonderful"

Witzenburger's two years at UW, particularly his experiences as a Sigma Nu fraternity member, were "wonderful." He met many good friends, including the late George Fowler. He also met an Alpha Chi Omega, Eleanor Thompson of Lusk, whom he would later marry and help rear three children.

Those children, Stephen, Sandra and Bruce, also attended UW. Even though they traveled extensively while growing up, enrollment at UW was virtually a given, according to Witzenburger.

"We were very instilled in them by the state and the expectation that, if they were going to college, they would go to the University of Wyoming," he says.

Dreams of Flying

Witzenburger knew, from the time he was 10, that he wanted to fly. He recalls the awe that airplanes — and his first flight — inspired. Military flying was his chosen field, because of the challenges it offered.

"The idea of being able to fly by oneself, with fighter aircraft, had a great deal more appeal" than other career options, Witzenburger says.

Following graduation from the program in 1941, Witzenburger served as a flying instructor at Moffat Field in Palo Alto, Calif. He served in the Flying Training Command until 1943. In 1944, he joined the 14th Air Force in China. Witzenburger flew P-51 Mustang single-engine fighters and was credited with 10 enemy aircraft destroyed while on numerous fighter sweeps.

On a check of a previously successful mission over Hainan, enemy groundfire hit Witzenburger's plane and forced him to bail out. He ended up in the hands of French Foreign Legion forces, who eventually helped him join their underground so that he could return to China and provide intelligence target information to Allied leaders. Rather than return home, Witzenburger transferred to the Burma-India Theater to fly P-47 Black Widow Night Fighters until the war ended.

After World War II and a brief trip to the U.S., Witzenburger returned to China as operations adviser to the Chinese Nationalist Air Force. He served in that capacity until 1949, when the Communist Party forced the evacuation of military dependencies and Americans.

Witzenburger then was assigned to War Plans at the Pentagon, representing the new U.S. Air Force. He worked there for three years, until 1952, when he moved on for six months at the Armed Forces Staff College.

From 1958-62, Witzenburger returned to Washington as chief Air Force liaison officer to the U.S. Senate and the White House. There, he worked with several

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Harold Kester...
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he lettered on UW’s first wrestling team. The extracurricular activities took a back seat — Kester says he rarely practiced in preparation for competitions.

Former UW President H.T. Person was one of the first people Kester met, and one of the most influential.

“He was the finest professor that I ever knew,” Kester says of Person, then head of the Civil Engineering Department. Person instilled in his students an enthusiasm for whatever subject was under study. “It was almost impossible not to learn in his class,” according to Kester.

Kester’s work on the H.T. Person Endowment Initiating Committee, which is helping to raise funds for a chair in the College of Engineering, and members are “well on the way” to achieving that goal.

Repaying a “Debt”

Kester’s work on the Person Committee is just one service obligation to UW that he maintains in a position as a member of the UW Foundation Board of Directors and the benefactor of several civil engineering scholarships. Some might consider his extensive work and dedication to UW above and beyond the call of duty, but Kester says it’s simply returning a favor.

“It is a good opportunity for me to pay back something that the university contributed to me,” he says. “It seems like when you owe a debt, you ought to pay it back.”

Fund-raising for the university in tight economic times is a challenging assignment, according to Kester. He finds broad support for UW, but not everyone can show if financially.

Kester is one individual who has been able to do that. His contributions provided 24 scholars last year to deserving students. Half of his contribution also went to help fund a new master’s program starting this fall.

Word of the Distinguished Alumni Award left Kester “dumbfounded.” He says he never believed he could have qualified for recognition, but he is appreciative.

Kester and his wife, former Bonnie Jane Reynolds (BA ’41), have four children: Patricia Mueller, Rebecca Weisert, Scott Kester and Martin Kester.

Witzenburger...
(Continued from page 7)

key lawmakers, which fostered an interest in the political process that later helped him in his own career as a state official.

During the Vietnam war, Witzenburger served as chief of staff of Air Force. Based in Saigon, he arrived in 1965, just before President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized the introduction of U.S. fighters — and eventually — ground forces into Vietnam.

Vietnam was “terrifying frustratiing,” according to Witzenburger. Tight controls over military activities from Washington required valuable time and lost many opportunities in the field.

Witzenburger didn’t know about public sentiment regarding the war until he returned to the U.S. 1 1/2 years later; he says he wasn’t surprised that Americans eventually lost faith in the country’s efforts.

“It was important that I let people know as much as I possibly could about what was happening,” he says. “As an active member of our armed forces, I tried to do so as tactfully as possible, but it was still difficult to explain to the American people.”

Witzenburger, a four-time recipient of the Legion of Merit and numerous other decorations, retired in March 1970, after 30 years military service. He had contacted then UW President William Carlson about returning to Laramie as the university’s director of development, but that position was not available until the fall. So the Witzenburgers toured Europe for four months and adjusted to civilian life.

When funding problems delayed his return to campus, Witzenburger and his wife, Eleanor, moved to her family’s home in Lusk. There, the couple helped neighbor Jim Griffith with his campaign for state senate. When Griffith won that post, he asked Witzenburger to join him at the capitol in Cheyenne.

As deputy state treasurer, Witzenburger successfully revamped Wyoming’s investment practices. For example, through the use of short-term repurchase agreements, he used the state’s short-term cash reserves more effectively and earned an additional $750,000 for the state.

Witzenburger turned his energies to the state auditor’s office after two years, when Gov. Sid Haithaway appointed him to fill the unexpired term of Everet Copenhagen. Witzenburger won the state treasurer’s office in 1974 and served a four-year term, during which time income from state investments continued to increase significantly.

At the end of that period, he tried his hand at national politics, competing against Dick Cheney and Jack Gage in the Republican primary for Wyoming’s lone House seat. When Cheney won his party’s nomination, Witzenburger took the job of Republican state chairman.

He held that post for two years. Illness forced the Witzenburgers to move in 1986 to California, where Ed could be in a warmer climate. He took a break from political life when he moved. Today, Witzenburger plays a “lot of golf” and works on several philanthropic projects.

Guthrie...
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attorneys.”

Another nominator said that, “as a trial judge, he was highly respected for his keen intellect and sound judgement in resolving controversies at the trial court level. On the Supreme Court, he has been recognized as a fine legal scholar and a justice whose opinions are well respected, not only in Wyoming but in the nation as well. Common sense and sound judgement have been the hallmark of his judicial work.”

An associate added, “Roper Guthrie was exceedingly bright, honest, mordant, kind and fair. It was always a pleasure to deal with him.”

“There are few citizens of this great state who have contributed more in so many ways than has Roper Guthrie,” that same person wrote. “In the field of law, he has excelled in the most respectable and noble manner. With his fellow man, Roper Guthrie has always had a helping hand ready to aid and assist. And he is a true patriot in the most meaningful sense — a person of strong ethical and moral convictions, religious belief and attachment to his beloved state of Wyoming and the University of Wyoming.”

“Fisher’s ‘forte’ wasn’t so much his love of, and devotion to, the law, but his skills and extraordinary talents as a ‘people’ person,” daughter Nancy Hinckley says.

Family meant the most to Guthrie.

“Through all of this — his life on an unusual ranch with unusual parents, his career as a lawyer and a judge, memberships, recognitions, etc. — the most important thing in his life was my mother, his children and his two grandchildren,” Hinckley says.

Roper Guthrie’s UW ties run deep in the Guthrie family. Guthrie’s wife, the former Mary Belle Pemberton, received her BA in 1932. All three Guthrie children, Mary Beth Guthrie, Nancy Hinckley and William Guthrie, are UW alumni. A grandson, Bartley, is currently attending UW.

Guthrie was a member of the Wyoming State Bar. He chaired the Wyoming Civil Jury Pattern Instructions Committee in 1982 and 1983 and co-authored the Wyoming Civil Pattern Jury Instructions. He was a member of the Episcopal church, Young Men’s Literary Club of Cheyenne and the Masonic Order and Shrine. Guthrie received a 50-year pin from the Upton Lodge #28 AF & AM in 1981.

Champoux to speak at UW Oct. 15-16

Nationally recognized speaker and teacher Tom Champoux returns to Laramie for another University of Wyoming seminar on “Developing Effective Interpersonal Dynamics.” Champoux’s sessions Oct. 15 and 16 are open to the public. Cost is $50 per person per day. A savings of $5 is possible by registering for both days before Oct. 1. Each day’s seminar runs from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. at Crane-Hill Cafeteria (across from the intersection of 18th and Grand Avenue). Check-in is between 7:30 and 8.

The UW Bookstore is sponsoring Champoux’s appearance. For more information, and to register, contact the UW Training and Development Office, Box 3422, Laramie, WY 82071 (phoote 307-766-2215).