By R. L. WOLVERTON, Alumnus

"My whole experience at the University of Wyoming was superb," said Distinguished Alumnus Jerry House. He received a degree from the College of Arts and Sciences with honor in 1935 and graduated in 1936 with a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the College of Law.

House's years at UW were exceptionally busy. Like many students, he worked to support himself and pay tuition. He'd been working since he was a sophomore at Rawlins High School. He worked the way through the University," he says, adding, "the only assistance I had was my ability to remember the teaching fellowship for American University, Washington, D.C., where I earned my Ph.D. in International Affairs." But he concedes that even then, he was a teaching fellow to complete his degree program.

Work and a full load study weren't enough for the unsatisfied House, and he participated in a wide range of extracurricular activities, both social and professional, and received recognition and respect from both his extracurricular activities and his high academic achievement.

Academic recognition came in several forms. House was inducted into Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor society open to students with grades in the top 25% of their class. He also received the Political Science award two years and was nominated twice to be a Rhodes Scholar.

House's experience as editor of the Rawlins High School newspaper and yearbook came in handy at UW. House was asked to take over as editor of the University's newspaper The Branding Iron, when the incumbent editor left unexpectedly before the academic year ended. House stepped into the editor's position for the remaining three semesters and for the following academic year.

The debate team took a portion of House's time as well, giving him the opportunity to travel to the University of Wisconsin for a speech and debate tournament. House's forensic talents weren't limited to speech and debate. Drama attracted him, too, and he performed in several plays produced by The Mask and Sardale, the University drama club. Additionally, House served as president of the Blue Key. And, as if all that weren't enough, House served a term as president of Psi Chi, the psychology professional organization.

House was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity, serving a term as Eminent Commander.

During his last two years at UW, House worked as a part-time lecturer for the College of Arts and Sciences, teaching economics and political science.

While at UW, House met and married Mary Elaine Beers. Mary Elaine became president of Kappa Kappa Gamma and graduated from the UW College of Arts and Sciences in 1934 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Reflecting on his time at UW, House said, "The University of Wyoming provided me with a solid, basic background for my future life. My time there was invaluable, primarily as a broad background for life in general."

Letters of nomination cited House's energy and work ethic, as well as his active involvement in campus activities and other extracurricular activities.

Jerry House

Arnold and Arnold law firm in Laramie. He then moved to Washington, DC, where he attended American University and eventually served as an assistant to Senator H. H. Schwartz. Working for Senator Schwartz, House drafted the Wool Products Labeling Act and then went on to work on enforcement of the act as an attorney for the Federal Trade Commission in 1941.

World War II interrupted House's work in Washington. He went to work for Milton Eisenhower (President Dwight Eisenhower's brother) in the War Reduction Authority in Denver. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where he served from 1943 to 1946. His Navy duties included service on the staff of the Chief of Naval Air Training in Pensacola, Florida.

Following the war, House returned to Wyoming, where he went into partnership with Ernest J. Copept and then opened his own law office in Cody. House is a member of the bar of the United States Supreme Court, Tenth Judicial United States District Court, Wyoming Supreme Court, Wyoming State Bar, Fifth Judicial District Bar and Park County Bar.

House was an active participant in the banking and finance industry as well. He started Wyoming's first title insurance company, which ultimately merged into the Title Guaranty of Casper. In 1959, he was instrumental in the formation of the First State Finance Company and later, First State Bank, which absorbed the finance company. He chaired the First State Bank Board of Directors until the bank merged with First Wyoming Bancorporation. Following the merger, he served on the First State Bancorporation Board of Directors.

Work wasn't all in courtrooms and boardrooms for Jerry House. In the 1950s, he bought The Phillips ranch, later named the Bar TL, with C. L. Schottow. With the Bar TL, House operated a progressive agricultural business. Under observation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, he partnered with Armour meat company in their beef improvement program. Using some of the best bulls in the state, his calves produced the first certified meat for the Red Poll, Scotch Highland and Charolais breeds. Later, with the Johnstown and Casper banks, he became a director of the Park County Bank and serves as its chief banking officer.

In 1961 House sold the majority of the ranch and later purchased a practice area in Cheyenne. He retired from the practice in 1991, and serves as a judge of the Wyoming Bar, as a member of the Wyoming Supreme Court, and as a director of the Wyoming State Bar Association.

Outside Wyoming, House has been a longtime member of the American Bar Association and served on the Association's Board of Governors and House of Delegates. He is a member of the Board of Governors that House had the opportunity to do some interesting traveling. He was a part of a team that traveled around the world, working with lawyers and judges and administrative officials, explaining the U.S. system of government and judicial system operate. He traveled to Australia and New Zealand in 1980, Japan in 1988, China in 1987 and the former USSR in 1988.

Special memories from these travels include meetings with Chinese leaders in the Great Hall in Beijing, China, and with Soviet leaders at the Kremlin in Moscow.

House has been a special one, because the agenda included dinner at the Kremlin with then Soviet President Gorbachev. Reminiscing about the evening, House says Gorbachev was a kind and charming host. "He was a very fine man. He opened the world for Russia," House remembered.

House has consulted with Albanian Constitutional Court (their supreme court) judge Thimi Kordi, who chaired a commission that drafted a proposed constitution and related laws for the Republic of Albania.

House was asked by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for the Republic of the Marshall Islands to serve as an associate justice of that court. His appointment was confirmed by the Marshall Islands president and cabinet.

UW has played an important part in House's family. He is proud of his children. All of House's sons attended UW. Peter and John have graduated from UW and John graduate from the Naval Academy and is currently serving as Park County Judge. Peter lives in Sedona, Arizona, where he and his partner "build houses and have a house." His twin, Steve, attended UW and left school to get married. He has since retired from United Parcel Service. Daughter Jerry Laine is Regional Librarian for Marathon Oil Company.