

## Jerry Housel

By R. L. WOLVERTON, *Alumnews* Writer

"My whole experience at the University of Wyoming was super," said Distinguished Alumnus Jerry Housel. Housel received a BA 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.

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

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

Academic recognition came in several forms. Housel 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.

Housel's experience as editor of the Rawlins High School newspaper and yearbook came in handy at UW. Housel 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. Housel stepped into the editor's position for the remainder of spring semester and for the following academic year.

The debate team took a portion of Housel's time as well, giving him the opportunity to travel to the University of Wisconsin for a speech and debate tournament. Housel'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 Sandal*, the University drama club. Additionally, Housel served as president of the Blue Key. And, as if all that weren't enough, Housel served a term as president of Psi Chi, the psychology professional organization. Housel was a member of Sigma Nu fraternity, serving a term as Eminent Commander.

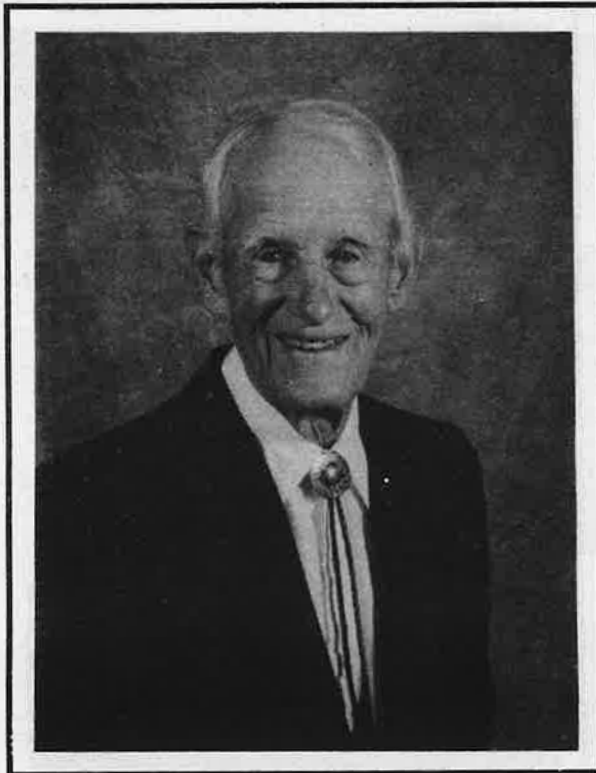
During his last two years at UW, Housel worked as a part time lecturer for the College of Arts and Sciences, teaching economics and political science.

While at UW, Housel met and married Mary Elaine Bever. Mary Elaine was 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, Housel 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 Housel's energy and work ethic as reasons he should be named an Outstanding Alumnus. Whether it was his studies at UW, the jobs he held to pay his university tuition and expenses or the extracurricular activities he was so active in, Housel was constantly on the go. He didn't slow down after graduation. Whether it was following his multifaceted career track or pursuing a wide range of community service projects, Housel has been tireless.

After graduation, Housel went to work for the



Jerry Housel

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, Housel 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 Housel's work in Washington. He went to work for Milton Eisenhower (President Dwight Eisenhower's brother) in the War Relocation 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, Housel returned to Wyoming, where he went into partnership with Ernest J. Gopert and then opened his own law office in Cody. Housel is a member of the bars 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.

Housel was an active participant in the banking and finance industry as well. He started Wyoming's first title insurance company, which eventually 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 Housel. In the 1950s, he bought the Phelps ranch, later named the Bar TL, with C. L. Schoonover. With the Bar TL, Housel 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 world, his calves produced the

first certified meat sires for the Red Poll, Scotch Highland and Charolais breeds. Later, with the Johnnycake Company of Hartford, Connecticut, his calves produced the first father and son certified Charolais sires.

In 1981 Housel sold the majority of the ranch and later donated the remainder equally to the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association and to the University of Wyoming Foundation. The donation to UW is designated as the Jerry W. Housel-Carl F. Arnold Distinguished Chair in Law.

The commitment to community service Housel demonstrated at UW stayed with him long after graduation. In addition to operating a busy legal office, ranching and chairing bank boards, he has given a great deal of time to the community. He served in a wide range of community service positions, including being elected as president of the Park County Bar Association, Commander of the Cody American Legion Post, President of the Cody Club, a member of the Wyoming Community College Commission and served on Governor Stan Hathaway's State Financial Advisory Commission. Housel served a term on the Cody City Council. He is also active in the Park County Stockgrowers Association, the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association and the Wyoming Woolgrowers Association.

In 1997, in recognition of his distinguished legal career, Housel was inducted into the Order of the Coif, the national legal honor society. In 1998 he was recognized as an outstanding Alumnus of the UW College of Law.

Outside Wyoming, Housel has been a longtime member of the American Bar Association and served on the Association's Board of Governors and House of Delegates. It was as a member of the Board of Governors that Housel had the opportunity to do some interesting traveling. He was part of a team that traveled around the world, working with lawyers and judges and administrative officials, explaining how 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.

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

Housel has consulted with Albanian Constitutional Court (their supreme court) justice Thimjo Kondi, who chaired a commission that drafted a proposed constitution and related laws for the Republic of Albania.

Housel 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 Housel's family. Housel talks proudly of his children. All of Housel's sons attended UW. Peter and John have graduated from UW and John graduated from UW law school and is currently serving as Park County Judge. Peter lives in Sedona, Arizona, where he and his partner "build beautiful homes." A third son, James Robert (Bob), 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.