Charles G. Kepler

by Julianne Couch
Alumni Editor

"L"oyal, kind, brilliant, thoughtfui, steady, and fully engaged in the life of his city, county, state and beloved university," That's how retired Sen. Alan K. Simpson described Distinguished Alumni Charles G. Kepler, and that view is echoed by everyone supporting Kepler's nomination.

Add to that list of descriptors "tremendously honored, pleased, and extremely impressed," which is how Kepler feels about receiving the honor.

Kepler has had a long career to show his character to others. He earned his JD in Law from the University of Wyoming in 1948 and a Master of Laws degree at the University of Michigan in 1950. He was a professor of business law at the University of Oklahoma from 1950 to 1952. He went on to serve as the general attorney with the Husky Oil Company in Cody, for eight years. Then in 1963 he joined Alan Simpson and his father Milward Simpson in the law practice of Simpson, Kepler and Edwards, and remained with the partnership for 40 years. He is now of counsel to the firm.

Alan's brother Pete Simpson recalls Kepler's transition from Husky Oil to the law firm. "Charlie was one of Husky Oil's bright young attorneys when my father caught sight of him and talked him into joining him as a partner in his law practice in Cody. Husky's headquarters was moving to Canada, but Kepler and his wife, the former Ursula Maraswili, (BIS '43) and their young daughter Lorento, had already made a home for themselves in Cody. Kepler recalls that it was he who approached the Simpsons in Cody because he saw what an outstanding law practice they were building. But Kepler acknowledges that many years have passed since that event took place. Regardless, as Pete Simpson says, "Husky's loss was Dad's gain and definitely a gain for the community of Cody and the state of Wyoming. Charlie's considerable contributions to his community might have been lost to us."

Some of those contributions include Kepler's work with the Paul Stock Foundation. Kepler was instrumental in a "complete reorganization" of the foundation to keep pace with

ions of dollars in support, including endowed scholarships, chairmanships, visiting professorships and support for the L. Floyd Clark Fund and the Keith and Thelma Thompson Fund, among other efforts.

Kepler recalls his early days as a student at UW. "I enjoyed it and considered myself extremely fortunate to go to college. We didn't have too much support in 1940. I was lucky to be able to go on a scholarship." He remembers that his room and board set him back $21.50 per month. He lived in the Kappa Sigma fraternity house. "It was tough financially," he recalls.

Kepler explains why he desires to support his alma mater. "I believe it is important that Wyoming alumni support the university's activities, not only with financial contributions, but also by participating in its activities. The university can only be as strong as the support it receives from alumni."

Kepler says he is "extremely pleased" with the education he received at UW. "When I got out of law school I wondered how I'd do, coming from a small school. The dean wanted to know if I wanted to go on for my master's. So I went on scholarship to the University of Michigan and met a larger group of people. I learned that we have an extremely good law school here."

Kepler is a member of the Wyoming Bar Association, served as its president in 1975, and is a member and leader in various professional organizations. He received the Order of the Coif award for Wyoming in 1997, which honors distinction in scholarship and professional accomplishments.

Kepler's connection to UW includes membership in the Cowboy Joe Club, supporting student athletes. Although basketball season is too long to slow for "long drives in bad weather," he has season tickets to football and horse football games give him a reason to visit Laramie and to see his brother, Fritz. "It is a good way to keep the family together," he explains.

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