Martha Brown Wyrsh
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After each storm, she flew down to visit the company's employees in the affected areas.

"I'll never forget flying over a little town and seeing nothing but the goal posts on a high school football field. Many of our employees who had lost their homes sent their families away while they worked to restore our infrastructure. Their personal lives were turned upside down.

Wyrsh grew up in Laramie and recalls plenty of summer adventures at the family cabin in the Snowy Range Mountains west of town, which the family still maintains. She recalls her first job, at 16, as a camp counselor in Wyo. near the Grand Tetons. That period taught her a lot about her own values and helped her decide what direction to go in life. The campers came from big cities and private schools and had a workliness that was foreign to me, and the other counselors talked about traveling to Europe. It made me curious about life outside Wyoming."

Wyrsh considered attending an out-of-state college but received an

Alumni Association Scholarship to UW. Here, she realized, she "could be a big fish in a small pond." Like her father before her, she was ASUW president for a year, and thus served on the board of trustees. "I saw the business side of the university, which provided a perspective on running a large, complex organization."

During her college career at UW, Wyrsh was a member of SPIRUS, Mortar Board, and Delta Delta Delta sorority. She was once an employee of the Alumni Association, and her duties included writing Wyogram announcements of the sort that still appear in this publication today.

Occasionally, she returns to UW to conduct workshops for the students on women in business. "I like connecting back to students and sharing experiences, and finding out what they are thinking," Wyrsh formerly served on the UW College of Arts and Sciences advisory board and is now a member of board of the William B. Ruckelshaus Institute of Environmental and Natural Resources. She was selected to the UW College of Arts and Sciences Outstanding Alumnaus roster.

Wyrsh has contributed to her professional community as well as to the University of Wyoming. She is involved with the United Way of Greater Houston and the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America. She was a member of the American and Colorado bar associations and formerly served on the George Washington University Law School board of advisors. Wyrsh lives in Houston with husband Gerry Wyrsh and two teenage children, Molly and Peter. "I really appreciate the support of my family and friends in Wyoming and beyond," she says. She's excited about riding in the Homecoming Parade accompanied by family members, especially because both her parents and her sisters are UW grads.

Wyrsh says she feels "honored and humbled" to receive the Distinguished Alumni award among "so many people who have accomplished things that matter in the world." No doubt other recipients would view her with the same attitude, such as her former boss Alan Simpson.

"She is a woman of complete integrity, honesty, perseverance, patience, loyalty, professionalism - and she is a friend to her friends. There is nothing she can't accomplish. Ask the folks at Duke Energy Corporation."

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