

## EmmaJo (Hatch) Spiegelberg Distinguished Alumna

by Julianne Couch  
Alumnews Editor

### Fast Facts

BA, College of Liberal Arts, '58;  
M.Ed., Education Administration,  
'85  
Ed.d. 1990, Boston University  
UW Activities: Chi Omega, Spurs,  
Iron Skull, Mortar Board, Phi Sigma  
Iota, Phi Gamma Nu, Angels  
Resides in Laramie, Wyo.  
Occupation: Executive director,  
Wyoming Association of Secondary  
School Principals (WASSP)  
Selected Accomplishments: Former  
president, UW Alumni Association  
Mountain Plains Representative to  
the ISBE Board of Directors  
Wyoming Business Education Hall of  
Fame Inductee  
Wyoming Assistant Principal of the  
Year  
National Business Education Asso-  
ciation Board of Directors  
Mountain Plains Business Education  
Association president  
Wyoming Business Education As-  
sociation and Wyoming Vocational  
Association president  
Wyoming Woman of Achievement,  
1991.  
Outstanding Business Education  
Teacher of the Year, National Busi-  
ness Education Association, 1991  
Family: Husband, the late James  
Spiegelberg (BS Engineering '56),  
sons William (Commerce and In-  
dustry '81), Emory (Commerce and  
Industry '83), Joseph John (Com-  
merce and Industry '85).  
Hobbies: Reading, traveling, comput-  
ers and software, horseback riding

It is hard to imagine students in Wyoming completing their education without some connection to EmmaJo Spiegelberg. Directly or indirectly, Spiegelberg has affected learners throughout the state as a teacher, principal, teacher of teachers and most recently as executive director of the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals.

Spiegelberg always knew she would go to college at UW and felt she was "born to be a teacher." She studied business and took many courses in a wide variety of areas outside of business, including education courses. She recalls taking courses taught by renowned professors including Samuel



EmmaJo (Hatch) Spiegelberg, BS Liberal Arts, '58, M.Ed '85

UW Photo Service

Knight, William Mulloy, and T.A. Larson. "I really appreciated them – they were so well known and respected in their fields, and I was able to take their courses."

Spiegelberg is considered by many to be as renowned in her field as those professors she admired were in theirs. As a young teacher in Laramie also involved in community affairs, she found herself on the board of civic organizations. In 1968, she attracted the notice of a business leader whose company was updating its information technology equipment. The business donated their older equipment and her students were then able to use tabulators and sorters and other devices from the pre-computer era. Although it was different than the standard business courses she had been teaching, she remembers thinking: "I will love to teach this, too."

In 1971, she wrote an exemplary proposal that was funded so she could teach computer programming to her data processing students at Laramie High School. Between 1971 and 1991, Spiegelberg wrote eight proposals to obtain state and federal funding for

exemplary programs. "I had to write the textbook so students would have something they could understand." She taught students using a business model. "They'd do simple things so they could learn how to use the technology. Then they'd learn to calculate interest like it would be on a house or car so they could see how much they were spending on interest. It helped them think about the real world." Over the years Spiegelberg became an expert at understanding how to teach computer software to her students. "You have to teach it in a way that kids can understand what they are doing and build on it from there. Some of the software took me two or three days to write instructions for my students so that they could understand the new concepts in 20 minutes. That's what good teachers are all about: to be able to explain it in simple terms so they can understand right away."

During this productive career, Spiegelberg continued her involvement with UW. When she was president of the UWAA, Spiegelberg's goal was to find a property suitable for the Alumni Association's home. She

helped arrange an option for the purchase of the current location while she was in Boston studying for her doctorate and once returned to Laramie for negotiations. In addition, she was on the Laramie Plains Museum board of directors. She helped with fundraising to save the Ivinson family mansion in Laramie for the Laramie Plains Museum. She is also proud of her board experience with the Cathedral Home for Children in Laramie where they work with traumatized youth, including troubled deaf youth. This program has become distinguished beyond our region in treating and educating these students so they can become successful individuals. She says she is nowhere near retirement and continues to be heavily involved with her sorority, Chi Omega.

Spiegelberg's career has included membership in education associations, presentations at conferences, and authoring articles and textbooks. She taught at Laramie High School from 1965 to 1993, minus two years to earn her doctorate at Boston University. Then she went on to be assistant principal of LHS until 1997. The following year she began service as principal of McCormick Junior High School in Cheyenne, a position she held until 2002. She has been with WASSP since then.

The items on the impressive resume that mean the most to her reflect her work on the national stage that brought recognition to her school for the outstanding work they did on behalf of the students. For example, the Business Department at Laramie High School was named the "best" department in the United States in 1997 by the business division of the American Vocational Association.

"I think what every good teacher wants is to make a real difference with students and in that way I feel very fortunate in my career," she said.

One former student at Laramie High School testifies that her efforts paid off: "Dr. Spiegelberg is among the best teachers I have had, both in high school and in college. I can honestly say that her classes more than prepared me for college, actually making my freshman year more of a review of what I had already learned in her classes."

Spiegelberg credits her UW education for the success her colleagues and students describe. "My professors at UW not only provided me with the knowledge to be a teacher but they also inspired me to be actively involved in professional organizations and in the business community. My UW education made it possible for me to make a difference." ❖