

Duane Woodard Distinguished Alumnus

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

FAST FACTS

EDUCATION: B.A. International Studies, UW, 1963; J.D. College of Law, University of Oklahoma, 1967.

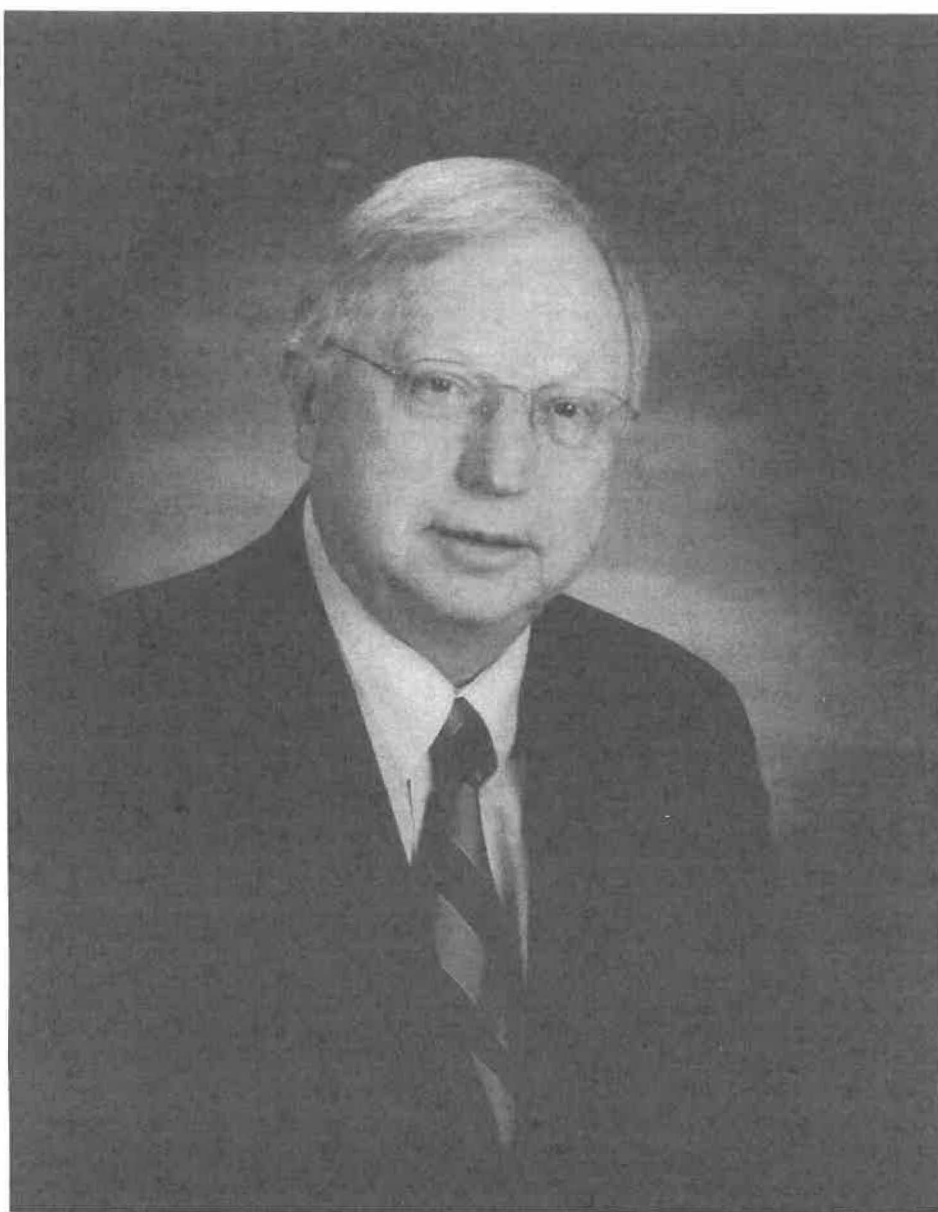
PROFESSION: Attorney at Law, former Colorado Attorney General.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Transition Team, President-elect Ronald Reagan, (1980); Government Service Award for Civil Rights Award as recognized by Colorado Civil Rights Commission, and Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, (1987); Tree of Life Award, Jewish National Fund, (1988); Chairman, Conference of Western States Attorneys General, (1989-1990); UW College of Arts and Sciences, Outstanding Alumnus, (2000); University of Wyoming Foundation Board, Executive Committee, and Chair Development Committee.

BEST KNOWN FOR: Outstanding public service and a deep sense of ethics.

FAMILY: Wife, Thelma Hansen Woodard '63 BS Pharm, two daughters, Elizabeth Wilson and Mary Woodard.

HOBBIES: Genealogical research and writing.



Duane Woodard, Distinguished Alumnus

When Duane Woodard campaigned for election to the Office of Colorado Attorney General he intended to resolve certain "Reserved Rights Water Claims," then under litigation between Colorado and its Native American citizens. It was his belief that this was a needless dispute which could better be turned into a win-win outcome for all involved.

When he won election in 1982, he explained, he initiated complex negotiations involving Native American water right claims, together with legal issues involving State and Tribal allocations under the 1922 Colorado River Compact. The result was a successful Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Final Settlement Agreement between the State of Colorado, Tribal officials, and Federal representatives. Assistance and leadership followed from members of the Colorado congressional delegation, which in turn led to the reauthorization of the Animas La-Plata Water Project, and Enactment of U.S. House Concurrent Resolution 2642 into law with the signature of former President Ronald Reagan.

When Woodard left office upon completion of his second term, there remained important funding and environmental issues. Nevertheless, both the state and congressional delegation, working as one with the two tribes, were able to successfully conclude their joint efforts and see this water project moved forward to a successful completion.

Today the waters of Lake Nighthorse, now impounded by a Bureau of Reclamation (BLM) dam, provide a sustainable water supply for the two tribes, and the citizens of the Four Corners Region of Colorado and New Mexico.

"I visited the dam a year and a half ago for the dedication," he added. "Southwest Colorado is a beautiful part of the state. It was eerily quiet in the hills and mountains. I thought to myself 'this is really something.'"

Woodard was recognized by both tribes following passage of the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988, (H.R. 2642) which reads as follows: "Sincere thanks of

appreciation for your leadership and assistance in passage of the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988," the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council. In addition, The Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribal Council presentation "Honored the close friendship between the tribe and the Colorado Attorney General for his hard and dedicated work," in behalf of the Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act.

As a result of the close working relationships that had developed over the years between the Office of the Colorado Attorney General, the United States Department of Justice, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the United States Department of Energy (DOE), Woodard was appointed to the United States Department of Justice, National Environmental Council, where he served from 1984 to 1990. He was its chairman from 1986 to 1987. In addition, Woodard was appointed to the DOE's External Review Group, serving in an advisory

capacity concerning the disposal and disposition of hazardous waste materials from 1986 to 1990.

In 1988 Woodard was recognized by the EPA for leadership in the enforcement of environmental protection laws with its Award for Excellence in Criminal Prosecution. Woodard graduated from Natrona County High School in Casper. Immediately following graduation he joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served with a Marine Line Company in the Far East as a member of the Third Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force Pacific.

Following his honorable discharge, he enrolled at UW in 1959. He received his degree in International Relations in 1963. He was a member of the ASUW Senate and president of the Epsilon Delta Chapter of Sigma Nu Fraternity. In 1964 he enrolled in law school at the University of Oklahoma, graduating in 1967.

Following law school, Woodard took a position in the Regional Counsel's Office in Denver with the Sinclair Oil Corporation. In 1969 he joined the 8th Judicial District Office of the District Attorney, Fort Collins, Colo. In 1972 he was admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1973 he entered the private practice of law in Fort Collins, and was also appointed to the part time position of Municipal Judge for the Town of Windsor, Colo.

Woodard was elected in 1977 to the 29th State Senate District of Colorado and served as the Senate Assistant Majority Leader.

In a private law practice carried on in Denver, Woodard focused upon land use and development issues, as well as alternative dispute resolution cases. Today he is retired from the active practice of law.

He has continued his involvement with UW with service on the American Heritage Center Advisory Board, the College of Arts and Sciences Board of Visitors, the UW Foundation Board of Directors, and a life membership with the UWAA.

Fellow UW Distinguished Alumnus Walter G. "Jerry" Saunders, a former member of the UW Board of Trustees, and a member of the Sigma Nu pledge class with Woodard, said "It was evident to me and other fraternity members that Duane had uncommon maturity, profound thoughtfulness, and above all the personal integrity that caused people to gravitate to him."

Carl M. Williams, a former UW Distinguished Alumnus, as well as a former Colorado State Senator and close observer, said, "He distinguished himself as a brilliant state legislator who

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hewed himself to the highest level of ethics. Regardless of the dominant party at the time, Attorney General Duane Woodard measured all his decisions by the highest standard of ethics and legal correctness."

Ann Tollefson, who has served in various volunteer roles at UW with Woodard, said, "His distinguished career as a State Legislator, lawyer, and Attorney General in Colorado should be of great pride to the University of Wyoming. The fact that he has been acknowledged for his work in and contributions to progress in environmental issues in those capacities is again a testament to his academic preparation at UW."

Another life long friend, UW Professor Emeritus John L. Allen, speaks of the man he refers to as Woody. "It is important to note that what Woody has done over the course of a long and distinguished career - his work with others less fortunate, his commitment to public service, his willingness to sacrifice his own personal ambition for the public good - was shaped by a great institution: the University of Wyoming."

Woodard recalls the first time he was aware of the award. "That was during the fall of 1959, halftime at a UW football game - a moment I clearly recall. The award was presented to John Bugas, of the Ford Motor Company. As a newly

enrolled freshman at UW I was struck by the magnitude of the recipient's career. I knew this recognition was something important as I watched the ceremony, but it never crossed my mind that someday I might also be so honored," he said.

"I fully understand the importance of the UW Distinguished Alumnus recognition and the honor it surely held for those exemplary UW graduates who came before. It is no less important for me, now finding myself in the same enviable position. This is a proud moment for me and my family and I want to thank the UW Alumni Association for making this the special day it is." ❖