

## Samuel D. Clark Distinguished Alumnus

By Julianne Couch  
Alumnews Editor

**Fast Facts:**

**EDUCATION:** BS, '69, Agriculture

**OCCUPATION:** Insurance executive, retired

**SELECTED**

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** Former mayor of both Jackson and Saratoga, Wyoming.

**FAMILY:** Wife Jennifer (Stout) Clark; three children: Sammy Jay Ayala, J. Jill Lucero, Abbey Hardeman

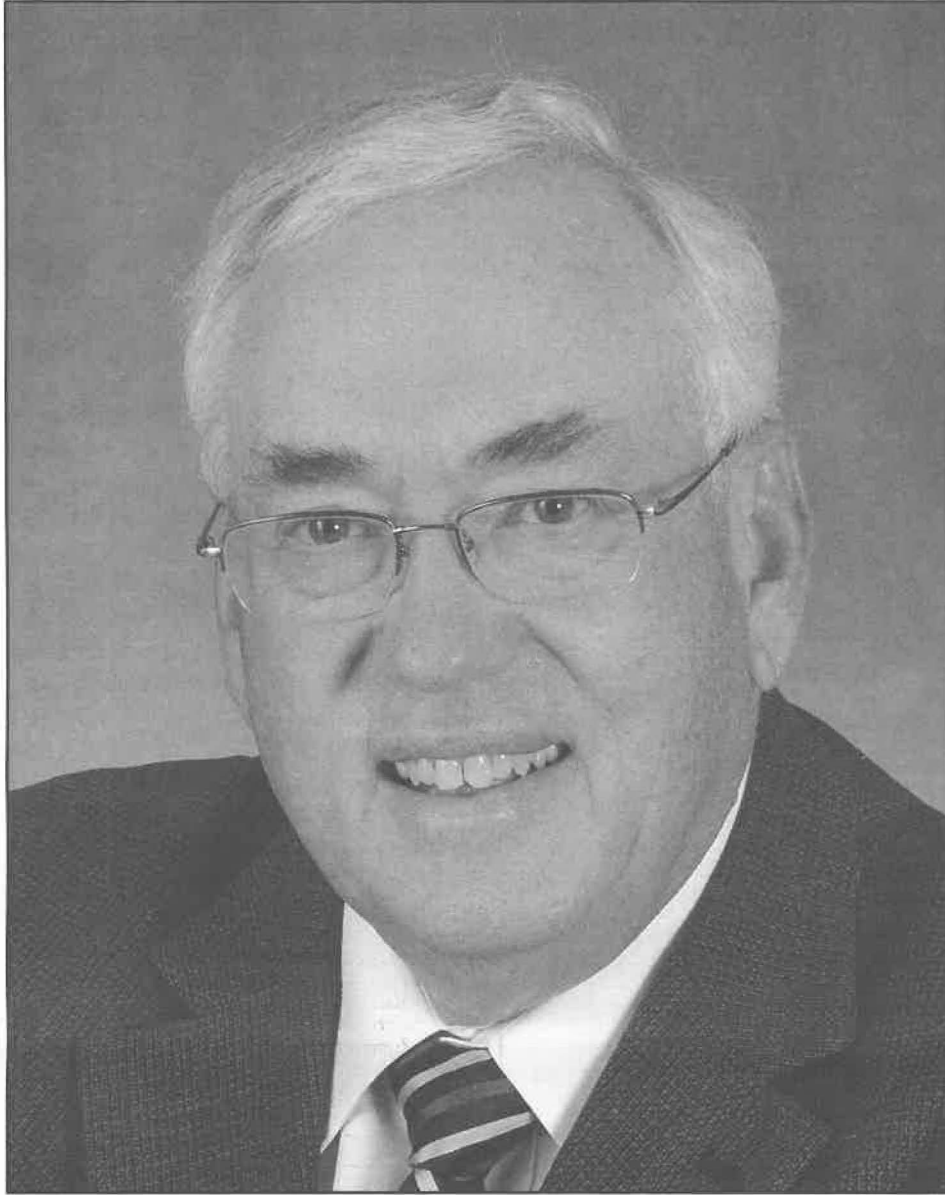
**HOBBIES:** Family, fishing, golf, snow machining, flying

While farming and ranching are inherently risky endeavors, a good insurance policy can help those livelihoods pay off. That's why so many in Wyoming know the name Samuel D. Clark and the company he worked for, Mountain West Farm Bureau Insurance.

Clark got his degree in crop science, admitting that he "looked for the quickest way to get a degree. I was married, we had our first child, it was time to get serious. I looked for a degree in field I enjoyed, that was crop science." Then after a bit of research into his job prospects, he discovered agriculture insurance.

Clark took his first job as an agent in Saratoga, Wyo., with the Mountain West Farm Bureau in 1969, and in 1975 was named agency manager. He became a district manager over 10 counties in 1993 and in 1995 was named assistant executive vice president and CEO. He served as CEO until 2007, when he retired. As an agent, he earned "All American" honors every year since 1971. As an agency manager, he was designated Agency Manager of the Year thirteen times. During his tenure as CEO, the company increased its written premiums from \$47.5 million to \$107.3 million.

Ralph Gill of Jackson knows Clark through their business relationship. "He was aggressive in organizing the Farm Bureau in Teton County," Gill explained.



Samuel D. Clark, Distinguished Alumnus

"Our area was starting to change from cattle ranching to hay crops to ski slopes and subdivisions. He was able to unite those who were still in agriculture to be more effective in communicating their positions on decisions that were being made regarding land use."

Phillip R. Joslin, CEO of Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company of Idaho, has known Clark since 1996. "Sam is a great ambassador for all things Wyoming," Joslin said. "He loves your state, your people, and your University. I have the highest respect for Sam's integrity, character, and business acumen."

Clark has served in other leadership capacities, as well. He is the former mayor of Saratoga and of Jackson, Wyo. According to Clark, it is common practice for members of the business community in small towns to take their turns volunteering for various civic duties. "I loved doing it," he said. "When I was mayor of Saratoga, our biggest

concerns were dogs and skunks. Jackson was a different story. We were experiencing a lot of growth."

Clark also brought his leadership ability to the banking field. He was a co-founder and the director of the Wyoming State Bank. The bank has since expanded and has opened a branch in Cheyenne.

**“I WAS MARRIED, WE HAD OUR FIRST CHILD, IT WAS TIME TO GET SERIOUS. I LOOKED FOR A DEGREE IN FIELD I ENJOYED, THAT WAS CROP SCIENCE.”**

He has also become involved in philanthropic activities and credits his wife Jennifer for leading him in that direction. "Jennifer was always big into hospital auxiliaries, working for school kids, and so forth. After we went back to Laramie in 1995, my position as CEO of Mountain West Farm Bureau gave me a lot of opportunity to be involved with philanthropy and economic development."

The director of the Cathedral Home, Jeff Biegert, explains how Clark's presence on the board demonstrated his commitment to higher education. Clark personally contributed to a scholarship fund that created an opportunity for two Cathedral Home alumni/residents "to pursue their dreams of education and a future built upon a sustainable income."

Clark admits that education was a bit of a dream for him in his early days at UW. "I thought you were supposed to be a freshman for more than one year, which I managed to pull off. I had a couple sabbaticals, and neither one was voluntary. Had it not been for the university and Jennifer I'd still be a freshman. I graduated with honors but surely didn't start out that way."

He continues to be involved with UW, as past president of the UW Alumni Association board, and past director of the UW Art Museum National Advisory board. Other civic involvement includes Albany County United Way, Masonic Lodge #48, Cowboy Joe Club, Lions and Rotary clubs, and past directorship of the Laramie Regional Airport board.

Clark was born in Coalville, Utah and raised in Evanston, Wyo. He and Jennifer now divide their time between in Bondurant, Wyo., and a "snowbird" home out of state. He still returns to Laramie for business on occasion and is proud of his family's UW connection. "Jennifer's father and two uncles are alumni, she is an alumna, and two of our three children are graduates, although our third went to Michigan. We have a lot of history at UW and we love it."

As far as being named a Distinguished Alumnus, Clark is philosophical. "I was very humbled and honored, but was I deserving as a student? I don't think so. But I've been a staunch supporter of the university and loved everything about it." 🐾