

Michael A. Jording, M.D. Distinguished Alumnus

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

Fast Facts:

EDUCATION: EX '76, Chemical Engineering, '80 M.D., Creighton University

OCCUPATION: Family Practice Physician, Newcastle, Wyo.

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Selected for Contract program in 1976 to attend medical school at Creighton; teaching in Wyoming Family Residency program; Wyoming Medical Society Board of Trustees 2001-2009; Wyoming State Historical Society Board of Trustees and President; Wyoming Historical Foundation Board of Trustees and President

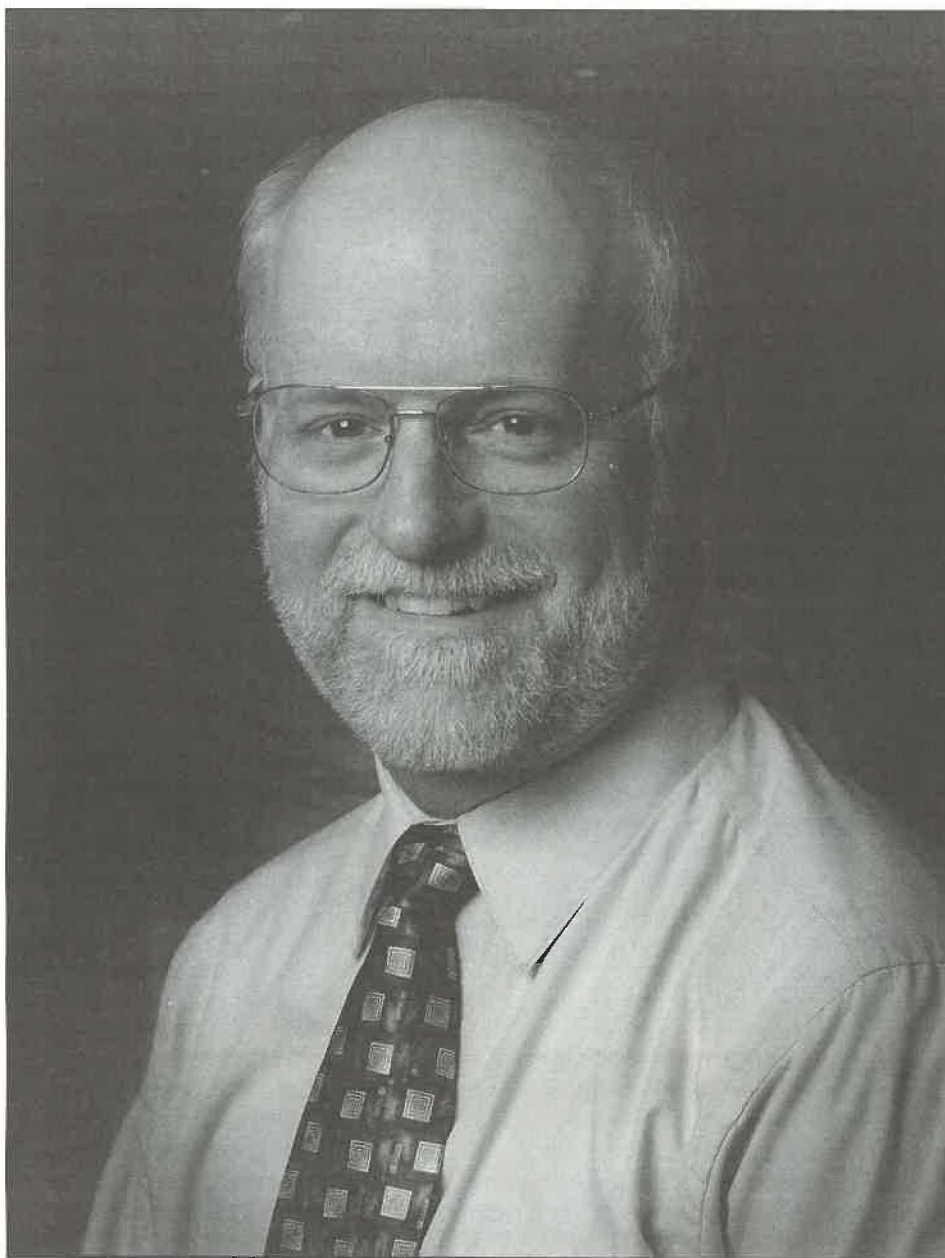
FAMILY: Wife, Peggy Jording; sons, Alexander Jording and Joseph Jording

OTHER INTERESTS: Author and historian

Michael Jording recalls that his four years at UW included "times that were particularly good and times that were particularly bad." The bad might include his first few days as a freshman, being asked during registration what college he was there to enter. Not realizing the correct answer was engineering, he replied that yes, indeed, he was going to college.

That answer is probably typical for a young person not used to the ways of higher education. Jording survived that early confusion to go on to excel at UW as a chemical engineering major emphasizing course work he'd need to enter medical school. In fact, he was accepted into the contract program UW had with Creighton University and headed to med school in Omaha even before completing all the credits for a Bachelor of Science degree.

That would count in the "good" category, although today his would be an unusual way to enter medical school. "My scores in college and my course work in biological sciences were good enough that they showed ability, and I had good reference letters from Dr. William Panco, UW professor of Zoology and Physiology and Assistant Dean of Students in the College of Human Medicine" Jording explained. Jording was obviously a good prospect, because over the years he has gone on to be a physician, an educator of future doctors, and a leader in the Wyoming medical community from his home in Newcastle.



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Sheila Bush, executive director of the Wyoming Medical Society, described Jording's involvement with that organization. Over the years he has served as president, board trustee, and committee chair. "One of Dr. Jording's greatest WMS accomplishments is his founding role in the Wyoming Medical Society Centennial Scholarship Fund. His personal dedication to this effort helped raise more than \$50,000, of which nearly \$49,000 was matched to establish an endowment valuing more than \$100,000 to award scholarships to WWAMI medical education students and outstanding graduates."

Sylvia Moore (BS '72, MS '82, Ph.D. '86) is Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research & Student Affairs with the Montana University System and professor emeritus in medical education at UW. She recalls her interactions with Jording began when he was a rural clinical preceptor. "Mike embraced his clinician-teacher role and quickly became one of the favorites—valued for his clinical skills

and his patient teaching and for his genuine interest in student welfare," Moore said. "Further, Mike always keeps his eye on his community and served as a model for the kind of community engagement that marks a successful rural primary care physician."

Jording has an interest in Wyoming communities beyond the health of their citizens. He is also deeply interested in Wyoming history, and has written several books and articles that are acclaimed by historians and sought by general interested readers. In fact, his first book is titled *A Few Interested Residents: Wyoming Historical Markers and Monuments* published in 1992. He says the inspiration for the book grew from traveling around the state with his parents, Don and Betty Jording. From the back seat of the car, young Jording grew curious about those historical markers they repeatedly passed. Combined with the 4th grade Wyoming history curriculum, "the seed was planted."

While most people who know

Jording are aware of his knowledge of Wyoming history, they may not know about his leadership at the state level in the Wyoming State Historical Society. Wyoming Historical Foundation treasurer Lucille Clarke Dumbrill (BA '49, MA '50) has frequently worked with Jording and has referred to his work when working on historic preservation projects.

"He has a way of working with local citizens to achieve their cooperation and stimulate their interest in history associated with Wyoming and the local area," she said.

Jording said working with the WSHS gave him opportunities to do things he never would have had been able to do otherwise. One of those was to help develop the first website of WSHS with the technical assistance of his brother-in-law, Rolf Anderson. "It was timely and necessary," he said, and something he couldn't have done alone, but "quite fun and quite an accomplishment."

Jording started his college life a bit torn between studying engineering and medicine, but he has been able to combine his interests in medicine and history as elements of a fulfilling life. Indeed, he credits his leadership role in one field with opening doors in the other, and vice versa. He believes following multiple interests in college is more difficult for students now than it was during his college years. "There is more emphasis on focus and specialization, even within a major," he said. But he cautions: "You can't live your life all in engineering or business. When people get out in life and participate in communities they'll be asked to serve on boards and committees that take them outside of their trained field of study. Whether you start preparing for that process in school or later, becoming a leader and giving time enriches your life."

As a UW student Jording chose to get involved by participating in the UW marching band and concert band. He became active in engineering student organizations and helped establish a formal program for students to work within their industry during the summer. Now these internship programs are so common that students don't realize how challenging it once was to find relevant summer jobs. In spite of these accomplishments, Jording said he was "terribly surprised by it and honored" when named a UW Distinguished Alumnus. "We've stayed tied to UW with our children going to school there," he said. "Our family's story is identical to many families in Wyoming, so it is a bit of an emotional thing to be recognized by the UW Alumni Association." ❧