Gregory C. Dyckman, UW Distinguished Alumnus

By Jillianene Cook
Alumni Editor

Past Facts:
EDUCATION: BS '77, Accounting, JD '80
OCCUPATION: Attorney at Law, Partner at Day, Dyckman, Reed & Healey, PA
SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Chairman, Permanent Appellate Rules Committee; Wyoming Supreme Court; appointments, Chairman, Wyoming State Bar; Law School Liaison Committee, 1997-present; Thomas G. Gorman Excellence in Professionalism Award, 1999; Ewing T. Kerr Inn, American Inn of Court, 2010; UW Foundation Board, since 2003; chairman, 2010 to 2012; A&S Board of Visitors, 1997 to present; Graduate, Leadership Wyoming, 2003.

As a young man, Greg Dyckman had two important things going for him: a curiosity to learn how people he admired found success, and a willingness to follow their path. That is why he joined the debate team, which led him to choose law as a profession, which led him to realize that if he wanted to stay in Wyoming, UW law school was the perfect choice for him.

Since making those decisions, Dyckman has built a 32-year law career in Cheyenne. He became an associate in 1980 and has been a full partner since 1983. He was admitted to the Wyoming State Bar, including all Wyoming courts, the Federal District Court for the District of Wyoming in 1984, and the United States Supreme Court in 1988. Dyckman's practice has a wide range, including banking, commercial law, business and commercial litigation, creditor's rights including bankruptcy, civil litigation, corporation issues, tax and estate planning, workers' compensation, real estate, administrative law practices, mediation/settlement conferences, appeals to higher courts, employment, and hospital privileging issues.

Before reaching this level of success, Dyckman took advice along the way. After a neighbor in Cheyenne encouraged him to join the high school debate team, he spent his junior year reading about law, courts, judges, and judges. "I loved debate, so it seemed like the law would be a good match to what I liked to study and do the most and what skills I was best at," he said.

Dyckman needed an undergraduate degree first, so he queried a number of judges and lawyers he'd been working with during his summer job at the Clerk of District Court about what they would have studied more in college if they had to do over. He thought they would support him the best. In the fall of 1976, he was accepted into the University of Wyoming and began studying accounting.

"I was shocked," he said. "They felt it was important for lawyers to have a business and accounting background. In law school you get a core course in accounting for lawyers, but most of my classmates didn't know anything about business, accounting, or how to read a financial statement. People who do business law have to know it; or they have to hire someone else to tell them what these things mean. I was fortunate I took that advice."

Dyckman has taken good advice, and he is also there to guide UW students the way he was guided. He works with students on the UW debate team, as well as with students in the law program.

He tells students that it is important for them to broaden their horizons when they come to campus, and seek out relationships with new friends and with faculty. "A lot of my Cheyenne friends were on campus but we hardly even saw each other. I lived in a different dorm than they did, and I competed on the debate team so I had those people that I got to know and travel with. Even though I was only 50 miles from home it felt very much like I was out on my own, and I was enjoying the college experience," he said. "I was afraid to try new things. He was involved in dorm government and the Beta Gamma Sigma, Phi Kappa Phi, Omicron Delta Kappa, and Beta Alpha Psi honoraries. He even tried his hand at sports announcing, joining with a friend to broadcast Cowgirl basketball games on KUWR. "We sat way up in the rafters at the Field House and did play by play announcing. We interviewed Coach Margie McDonald after the game. The radio station signal was so weak at that time that if the wind was blowing the broadcast might not have even gotten off campus," Davidson recalled.

He also continued debate, traveling all over the western U.S. "crammed in a van," the best thing about it was it taught him time management and "fend my competitive side," he said. "I learned that it made sense to go meet the professors at the beginning of the semester to explain why I'd be absent and how I planned to get work done on time."

Kenneth L. Smith, head of the Department of Communications and Journalism, spoke of Dyckman's contribution to UW. "I don't know if this university can ever repay the debt it owes to Greg, but the Distinguished Alumnus award is certainly one way to start because it exemplifies what an alumnus can be. He is a huge success in his field. He serves as a role model for past and current students who know and recognize his impact on UW Debate. And he is outspoken about the importance of the education that he received at UW."