

Gregory C. Dyekman, UW Distinguished Alumnus

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

Fast Facts:

EDUCATION: BS '77, Accounting; JD '80
OCCUPATION: Attorney at Law, Partner at Dray, Dyekman, Reed & Healey, P.C.
SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Chairman, Permanent Appellate Rules Committee, (Wyoming Supreme Court appointment); Chairman, Wyoming State Bar Law School Liaison Committee 1997-present; Thomas G. Gorman Excellence in Professionalism award from Ewing T. Kerr Inn, American Inns 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 Dyekman 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, Dyekman 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, to the Federal District Court for the District of Wyoming; to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, U.S. Tax Court, in 1980; and to the United States Supreme Court in 1988.

Dyekman'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, worker's compensation, real estate, administrative law practices, mediation/settlement

conferences, appeals to higher courts, employment, and hospital privileging issues.

Before reaching this level of success, Dyekman 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, juries 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.

Dyekman 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 it to do over. He thought they'd suggest he major in the sort of humanities studies that ground many legal educations. Instead, they suggested he study accounting.

"I was shocked," he said. "They felt like it was important for lawyers to have a business and accounting background. In law school you get a one-hour 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."

Dyekman 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 was enjoying the college experience."

He also wasn't 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,



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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 "fed 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 Dyekman's contribution to UW. "I don't know if this university can ever repay the debt it owes to Greg, but the Distinguished Alumni 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."

Stephen D. Easton, dean and professor of law, explain Dyekman's

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contributions to the law program. "I suggested to the Wyoming Bar Association that our students would benefit from a course in Wyoming law, as they prepare for the bar exam. Greg took this suggestion and ran with it. In less than a month, he had found speakers for fifteen different essay subjects on the bar exam."

Dyekman said that after he graduated and got busy with his practice and with civic life in Cheyenne, his involvement with UW waned. That was until he was in charge of a fundraising event for the Boy Scouts in Cheyenne with President Gerald Ford. His presence there had been noticed by Thyra (Godfrey) Thomson (A&S '39), whose son was his law partner at the time. She asked him directly if he'd like to attend the next A&S Board of Visitors meeting with her. "I went to that meeting with her and loved it. I'm still on

that board, and that led to involvement with the foundation board and the establishment of the law school board. It was that personal contact that got me re-involved."

Dyekman describes himself as a "big advocate of the non-profit sector" and as such has received numerous accolades. "The one I hold most dear was being named Person of the Year from the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce in 2008. That was a pretty distinguished group to become part of and it came as a total surprise to me."

Dyekman said he was very pleased to be named a UW Distinguished Alumnus. "I love the people at the university. I have met so many wonderful administrators, faculty, students and staff through my various experiences which have been enriching to me in a personal way. I learn a lot every time I'm on campus. I never go there without wishing I could go back to school. I think of all the institutions in Wyoming, the university is the one that can make the most difference in the lives of people." ❖