

Joseph R. Geraud UW Distinguished Alumnus

By Julianne Couch
Alumnews Editor

Fast Facts:

EDUCATION: JD '50

OCCUPATION: Law Professor and
UW General Counsel (retired)

SELECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

1993-2012, board member, then president, Central Wyoming College Foundation; 2002, the Riverton Chamber of Commerce Citizen of Year; College of Law, Distinguished Alumni, 2006. Wyoming Association of Community College Trustees Foundation Volunteer of the Year for 2011-12.

Joe Geraud can think of two pretty pleasant surprises he's had over the course of his public life. The first was being offered a job to teach at the UW Law School, the one from which he'd graduated a few years earlier. The second was learning he'd been named a UW Distinguished Alumnus.

Geraud graduated from the College of Law at the top of his class and had been the Editor-in-Chief of the *Wyoming Law Journal*. He was recalled to active duty in April of 1951. From 1955 to 1969 Geraud taught full time in the College of Law. He retired from the Navy with the rank of Commander after forty-two years of active and reserve service.

He was admitted to practice before the Wyoming Supreme Court, the U.S. District Court of Wyoming, the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Court of Military Appeals. After completing 50 years as an active member of the Wyoming Bar Association, he joined the retirees section of the Association.

"I remember the first class when I started as law professor," he said. "It was a great bunch of guys. Some were older than I was but we turned out some very remarkable students."

Geraud recalls one thing he especially enjoyed about being a professor. "There was time to think and explore any ideas you had in the classroom. We used the Socratic method, give and take in dis-

cussing the case that had been assigned. We talked about whether a thing might seem unfair, but still be the rule of law. The rule of law should be firm so that everybody has the same standard."

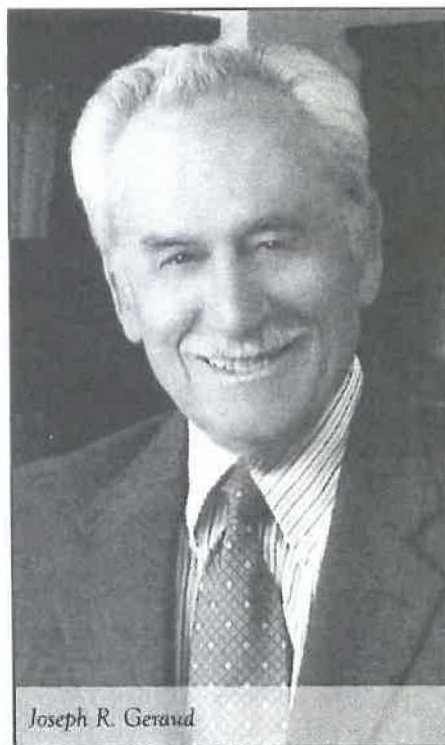
While attending Oregon State College in a naval officer training program, he met Bette Kovar, a student from Fullerton, Calif., and they married after his release from active duty. He recalls that when he enrolled at UW for the 1946 fall quarter, "she learned to operate and cook upon a wood stove which was provided by the university in the apartments known as Veterans Village."

In 1964 he was appointed Special Assistant Attorney General for the University Board of Trustees as an additional duty. His teaching duties ended when he began service as vice-president for Student Affairs which included responsibility for the Divisions of Registration and Records, Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, Student Health Service, Counseling and Testing, Foreign Student Services, Placement, and the Dean of Students. He also continued to serve as Special Assistant Attorney General for the University of Wyoming Board of Trustees until his legal duties were changed in 1972 to that of University Legal Counsel, which he performed until 1980 and then returned to full time teaching in the College of Law. Over the years, he taught courses on the subjects of property, trusts and estates, oil and gas, public land, insurance, real estate skills, and specialized seminars.

Geraud was promoted to full professor in 1962 and was named in 1981 as the AMAX Foundation Professor of Natural Resource Law.

Wyoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Marilyn S. Kite, who studied under Geraud, said: "I know the impact he has had on hundreds of attorneys, in Wyoming and across the country, in their education and practices, especially in the field of natural resource law. His expertise in oil and gas, mining, public lands, and property law contributed to the UW College of Law's reputation as one of the leading natural resources law schools in the region and the country. I am sure he taught most of the 'deans' of oil and gas law in Wyoming their trade."

Congresswoman Cynthia M. Lummis, who also studied under Geraud, added: "He taught public land law from the perspective of first-hand knowledge



Joseph R. Geraud

of the interactions of Wyoming ranchers, mineral producers, and recreational users with public lands administrators. To this day I know I am prepared for natural resource responsibilities on the committees I serve on in Congress because of the academic and practical guidance of Joe Geraud."

During his career, Geraud was heavily involved in the evolution of the governance structure of the University. In 1966 he moved the University Faculty to create a Faculty Senate to replace the "town hall" meetings of the faculty, and then served on the committee which developed the original bylaws of the University Faculty and the Faculty Senate. At the direction of President Fey, he commenced the development and implementation of a system of Trustee Regulations and University Regulations which were to replace the huge accumulation of unorganized and independent directives from the Board of Trustees and various University officials or faculties which guided the operation and purposes of the University and its Colleges. After return to the College of Law, he served as its representative to the University Faculty Senate from 1982 until he retired.

In 1968 he was appointed as the Faculty Athletic Representative for

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intercollegiate athletics and worked with a succession of five Directors of Intercollegiate Athletic to assure on-campus compliance with rules of governing athletic associations, as well as certifying the eligibility of each student-athlete for competition.

He was designated by the College of Law in 1958 to represent it on the Board of Trustees of the newly organized Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, a consortium of western law schools and bar associations. He was elected to the

Board's executive committee in 1960 and served until 1969. On behalf of the Foundation, he directed the study of oil and gas leasing on federal public lands as a part of the U.S. Congressional Public Land Commission's study of public land law.

In 1958 he was appointed by the Southwestern Legal Foundation to its board of editors for the *Oil and Gas Law reporter*, a position he retained until 2006. In 1999, he was a recipient of the Foundation's prestigious John Rogers

Award in "recognition of the remarkable commitment to the oil and gas community and the educational mission of this Foundation."

After retiring from UW, Geraud returned to Riverton. He had initially given some thought to returning to sheep ranching, the vocation of his youth. Instead, he found the sheep industry greatly changed over the years. "I parted company with the idea of raising sheep. I said I was going to retire, and that's what I did." ❀