

## David D. Freudenthal, UW Distinguished Alumnus



Thermopolis native David D. Freudenthal (J.D. '80) is one of Wyoming's best-known citizens. That is likely because he served two terms as Wyoming's governor, starting in 2002. By the end of his tenure, Wyoming was ranked as the "Best Run State in America" by 24/7 Wall St., based on a review of hundreds of data sets and a variety of metrics ranging from debt rating agency reports to median income.

"If you are going to be a governor, this is the place to do it," Freudenthal says of his time in that position. "People are more than happy when you are doing something wrong to tell you so. They have better access to you and feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. That makes democracy work."

Holding the state's highest office might have been enough for Freudenthal to have been named a University of Wyoming Distinguished Alumnus. But he has had a full and wide-ranging career. From 1994 to 2001, he was U.S. Attorney for Wyoming. He co-chaired the Wyoming Governor's Energy, Engineering, STEM Integration Task Force in 2012 and remains a member of that group. He is presently practicing law full time as a senior counsel with the Crowell & Moring law firm.

Freudenthal credits the excellent faculty at the UW College of Law for helping him as a student shape the way he thinks about the law. Just as importantly, they helped him "maintain the enthusiasm," which he says is one of the biggest struggles for busy students in such a rigorous academic program.

"By the time you get to the 'mature age' where I am, you develop an instinct for it," Freudenthal says. "The law changes rapidly, so it is a great career. It allows you to do all sorts of different things. The law school taught me to be analytical, ethical and think like a lawyer."

For two years starting in 2010, Freudenthal was a Distinguished Professor in the UW College of Law. He led seminars on energy, environment law and economics. He had the opportunity to create for his own students the sort of environment that nurtured him. "The students are wonderful," he says. "They work hard and they challenge you. Being around the students gives you lots of hope for the future."

Freudenthal says it was a great honor, and an unexpected one, to learn that he'd been named a UW Distinguished Alumnus. But he wonders if somehow the honor isn't backwards. "The university contributes a lot to me," he says. "I should be honoring UW for being a distinguished university, instead of the other way around."



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