

2023 Distinguished Alumni Award Winner

Hamid Khan

By Micaela Myers

To some, the University of Wyoming may seem an unlikely place to prepare for a high-profile international career. But for Hamid Khan, who grew up in Worland and Sheridan, UW provided the perfect launchpad.

Khan says it gave him top-notch instruction, mentoring from professors and singular opportunities. After completing his bachelor's degree in political science (1998), he earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School. Khan now serves as a judicial education attorney for the Federal Judicial Center — the education and research agency for the federal judiciary located in Washington, D.C. In addition, he's an international consultant for the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative, helping to protect women's rights in Islamic marriage contracts. Khan also serves as an adjunct professor of Islamic Law at the University of Michigan Law School.

Khan says that three memories from his time at UW are particularly impactful. The first was when he signed up for UW's London semester. The late Duncan Harris, who led the honors program, helped arrange an internship with the British House of Commons. However, Khan was short on money. He talked to UW administrators he knew, from deans to the president, and they helped him come up with

the difference. At most universities, students wouldn't know these administrators, let alone be able to go to them for help. The semester was a fantastic experience and ignited his love of travel. He later returned to London, showing his wife and children some sights he saw as a student.

Another time, the head of the political science program, Michael Horan, invited him and some other students to breakfast, not telling them the meal was with former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

"I had the opportunity to sit down at breakfast and discuss foreign policy with the former U.S. secretary of state," Khan says. "It was incredible and completely unexpected."

Thirdly, he secured an internship with U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson via his Associated Students of UW connection with Pete Simpson. All these amazing experiences helped position him for his impressive career, which has included serving as a national security fellow for the Truman National Security Project, a senior adviser for the Interagency Outreach and Response Team in the Office of Refugee Resettlement for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and a consultant for



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the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

"The variety combined with public service has been the most rewarding part of my career," Khan says.

And it all started right here in Wyoming. As he explains: "Wyoming is a hidden gem. It has all the great resources of any major university. It's all there for the students' taking. All it requires is a willingness to ask and the tenacity to see it through. UW affords you that opportunity. I think one of the things a positive university experience can accomplish is establishing the confidence to march out into the world and take on anything. I'm fortunate enough to synthesize all those opportunities into the daily lived experience I have right now."

Khan's impressive international career and service to his country make him a 2023 UW Alumni Association Distinguished Alumnus.