

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENT

Randall Luthi

By Micaela Myers

Distinguished Alumni Award winner Randall Luthi's life and career are defined by two places — Wyoming and Washington, D.C.

"I've had the opportunity to serve 12 years in the Wyoming Legislature, work in the offices of Dick Cheney and Alan Simpson, serve in the George W. Bush administration, testify before congressional committees on energy issues, catch a 125-pound halibut, tour through Morocco and Oman with the best companion, and accomplish several years of selling steers that averaged 700 pounds, and I still have fishing trips with high school classmates, keep close family ties and now work with Gov. Mark Gordon," he says.

Luthi was raised on the family farm and ranch in Freedom, Wyo. While he loved hunting, fishing and cattle, he could skip the farming and harsh winters. "There are two versions of how Star Valley got its name," he jokes. "One, star of all valleys, and two, abbreviated from starvation valley." Luthi adds, "This era of mixed feelings helped me realize that you take the good with the bad, and usually the scales of life tip toward the good."

He and his siblings were raised to work hard and do well in school. At UW, he loved attending sporting events and took a variety of classes, eventually deciding to major in administration of justice (1979). When he was unsure of what to do next, a friend suggested law school. Luthi was accepted to UW and Pepperdine University and wisely chose Wyoming (1982).

"UW helped me learn the importance of faith and knowing that hard times happen to everyone," he says. "My mother passed away in my first semester of law school during finals."

His professors helped him make it through, and law school gave him a solid foundation. Luthi's

first job was as a legislative assistant to U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson. In addition, he served as an attorney in the Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor and as a senior counselor for environmental regulations in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of General Counsel.



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"Wyoming and Washington, D.C., could not be more different, but they both gave me an opportunity to work in areas in which I have always had an interest — energy and natural resources," Luthi says. "My law degree from UW gave me the opportunity to work on federal issues concerning management of natural resources, and Wyoming was always a ground-truthing to see how federal policies affect those who actually work, recreate and live in a state

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where almost 50 percent of the surface and 67 percent of the minerals are managed by the federal government. Unfortunately, often it is a relationship of conflict and strife.”

After a few years in D.C., Luthi returned to Wyoming to run the family ranch. He also established a law practice and ran for the Wyoming Legislature. Joining the House of Representatives in 1995, he went on to become speaker of the House in 2005–06. As majority leader and speaker, he was instrumental in the formulation of state budgets and served as a legislative member of the Energy Council.

Luthi then returned to D.C. to work for the second Bush administration. He served as the deputy director of the Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service before being named director of its Minerals Management Service. Under his leadership, the service conducted the largest Gulf of Mexico outer continental shelf and Arctic outer continental shelf oil and gas lease sales in history. Luthi also oversaw the highest mineral revenue collections and distributions in history and the creation of a renewable energy office. He went on to serve as president of the National Ocean Industries Association, a national trade association representing over 250 companies involved in the exploration and development of offshore energy.

In 2019, Luthi was called back to Wyoming to work for Gov. Gordon as an energy adviser and is now his policy director. He also serves as managing partner of the Luthi Ranch and on UW’s Energy Resource Council.

“I have been able to work in areas of great challenge and personal interest,” Luthi says. “A willingness to make changes and take a chance is a great motivator.”

Distinguished Alumni and Medallion Service Award Nominations



THE DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD recognizes alumni who are distinguished in their business, profession, or life’s work; are persons of integrity, stature, and demonstrated ability; reflect upon and realize the importance of their UW education.

THE MEDALLION SERVICE AWARD recognizes alumni or friends of the university who have given unselfishly of their time, talent, or support to the university, and are a person of integrity and stature. This award may not be given annually, but nominations are accepted each year, and MSA nominees need not be UW alumni to be eligible.



Completed nominations must be submitted online by Feb. 28, 2025, to be considered. Nominations can only be submitted online at www.uwyo.edu/alumni/awards.



Alumni Association