

Dan Jones, Wyoming's Distinguished Alumni of 2014, Visits the High School

Written by Maddie Henke

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On May 19th, Wyoming High School's annual Foundation Day, Dan Jones, Wyoming's twelfth distinguished alumni chosen by the Wyoming School Foundation and the Distinguished Alumni Society, came to share his experience and wisdom with the current students. He attended multiple classroom sessions then gave a school-wide assembly in Pendery Auditorium.

Dan Jones graduated from Wyoming in 1956. Jones's high school experience reflects so clearly our high school lives today. That is to say, he was involved in *everything*: track, newspaper, football, tennis, stage crew, golf, Future Teachers of America (FTA), basketball, choir, and more - even making a reference in his presentations to a Nerf war. He also shared that in his senior year he was voted by his fellow students Best Dressed. These school accomplishments, however, were not his most important.

Dan Jones is the founder and owner of NewsBank, an online database that gives access to thousands of historical and current news sources. When Jones asked the classroom how many students had used NewsBank before, every single student put their hand in the air. The database's easy-to-use set up and seas of information have made it critical for research papers, and after a \$1,000,000 donation in kind of NewsBank resources, Wyoming High School has the largest collection of news of any high school in the world!

The most important piece of advice from Dan Jones to Wyoming students: Be a leader. In entrepreneurship and all other areas of life, leadership is exceedingly important and critical to success. Jones stressed that a leader must be loyal, fair, honest, caring, and - above all - must help people to grow. They must ensure everyone works together as a team. "Leadership," he explained, "is all about people. Life is all about people." This lesson was made obvious to him during his time as an officer in the navy, where out of the ten months of training, 40% of it was leadership oriented. Jones remembered that it was the leadership skills he obtained in the navy that inspired him to lead people in a business. It was with the awareness that goals can be accomplished together and the importance of leadership that led to his success running NewsBank.

Dan Jones also advised to take advantage of the many Advanced Placement classes available to us at Wyoming and the other educational opportunities at our "top-notch" high school. He stressed the importance of a broad curriculum in college, so as to have a wide range of knowledge, whether you plan to pursue business, or something else entirely. He believes strongly in utilizing study abroad programs in college so as to achieve a greater understanding of the world. He tries to consciously maintain this understanding and works to actively hire employees from all over the world.

Jones remembers his years at Wyoming High School as a "fabulous experience," and many of his closest friends now were his classmates through his Wyoming years. Dan Jones exemplifies

what he believes in, taking full advantage of his learning opportunities and adhering to the values of entrepreneurship: initiative, risk taking, and most importantly, leadership.

Joining Dan Jones this year for Foundation Day was Ambassador Thomas Boyatt. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Foundation Day, returning almost every year to speak with the student body since his induction as a distinguished alumnus in 2002.

Ambassador Boyatt never fails to amaze all with his tale of valor and heroism displayed during the historic hijacking of a TWA plane by Palestinian guerillas. For his negotiation skills, he was recognized with the prestigious Emeritus Award by the U.S. State Department.

Ambassador Boyatt shared words of wisdom during the all school assembly saying, “The better you understand the 20th century, the more successful you will be in the 21st.” His

list of accolades and achievements span the lifetime of a successful diplomat. He remains humble, saying he “stands on the shoulders of others who came before,” a testament to the legacy of Wyoming’s distinguished alumni and the bright futures of alumni to come.