

Wyoming Foundation Day brings home distinguished alumni

Students, inspired by words of advice, give them standing ovation

Story by Amy Elliott

Welcome Home Lance Williams, Wyoming High School Class of 1968! Lance Williams was back in Wyoming this September, recognized as the Wyoming School Foundation's Distinguished Alumni of 2009. The Wyoming School Foundation began recognizing Distinguished Alumni in 2002. Honorees are recognized as part of Wyoming Foundation Day, a celebration that brings successful alumni back to Wyoming to meet with high school students. In the past, the Distinguished Alumni would meet with students in small classroom settings, but 2009 brought the first Wyoming Foundation Day All School Assembly.

The Barry Bonds – Wyoming connection

Lance Williams, with Mark Fainaru-Wada, wrote *Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports*. The book earned Williams the George Polk Award, Edgar A. Poe Award, AP Sports Editors Investigative Reporting Award, and the Scripps Howard Foundation's First Amendment Award.

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Gathering after the Wyoming School Foundation Distinguished Alumni Assembly at the Wyoming High School, are: Carole Leish, Trustee Wyoming School Foundation; Dwight Moody, President-Elect Wyoming School Foundation; Carl Westmoreland, Distinguished Alumni Wyoming Class of 1955; Thomas Boyatt, Distinguished Alumni Wyoming Class of 1951; Lance Williams, Distinguished Alumni Honoree 2009 from Wyoming Class of 1968; Dr. Paul Sperduto, Distinguished Alumni Wyoming Class of 1976.

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Williams, who refused to testify about his news sources in the case, was sentenced to eighteen months in federal prison. "If you make a promise, do you keep it under every circumstance?" Williams asked the Wyoming High School student body, explaining his



Speaking to the Wyoming High School student body, Lance Williams shared his story of breaking the BALCO sports doping scandal and the "untenable moral position" athletes were forced to face prior to his book, *Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports*. Carl Westmoreland, Thomas Boyatt, Paul Sperduto, and Carole Leish listen on stage.



predicament. "There was no doubt in my mind I did the right thing. I was comfortable with my choice." The Hearst Corporation lobbied in Williams' defense, and the federal sentence was set aside. Williams has since worked with members of Congress on the Free Flow of Information Act in an effort to protect future reporters and whistleblowers.

Speaking of his youth spent Chisholm Trail, he said "Wyoming was my whole world at that time...as it is for most of you." He was a member of the football and track teams, scouts, drama club, and he was a National Merit Scholar, but he modestly explained, "Other kids in my class were smarter, had better academic records, were better athletes, more buttoned down kids than I. I could not have predicted I would be up here, but here I am... I am honored."

Once a Cowboy, always a Cowboy

Williams was joined at Foundation Day by three other Distinguished Alumni recipients: Dr. Paul Sperduto '76, Ambassador Thomas Boyatt '51, and Carl Westmoreland '55. Each one spoke about the role that the Wyoming community and schools played in their life choices and who they became, and each shared a few words of advice with the students.

Thomas Boyatt, former United States Ambassador to Colombia and recipient of the State Department's Meritorious Honor Award, shared what he believes are "the three most valuable lessons: 1. Show up for work, 2. Be ready, and 3. Work hard." Boyatt added, "Listen to your parents. There is the possibility, however remote, that they may say something that will help you now or in the future."

Dr. Paul Sperduto, a radiation oncologist in Minnesota, said, "The world is full of people who want to be the best, but the world is not full of people who are willing to work for it." He encouraged the students to step out of their comfort zones

and try something new while still in high school. "If you do the same things every day, you end up in the same spot."

Carl Westmoreland, Founding Staff Curator for the National Underground Freedom Center, gave a passionate speech about his great grandfather establishing a home at 720 Oak Avenue in Wyoming in the 1890s. Westmoreland told the students, "You have to be willing to give all you have - and then give some more. You have to be willing to run the steps." The assembly ended with a much deserved standing ovation from the entire student body, after Westmoreland poignantly said, "Your turn is tomorrow."
