



Randy Susskind '85 Welcomed Back to Wyoming High School

Written by Kaan Ladd, a senior at Wyoming High School

Monday, October 23, brought Foundation Day back to Wyoming. Foundation Day is an event organized by the Wyoming School Foundation that brings back successful alumni to talk to the students and share their experiences and knowledge that helped them succeed. This year's Foundation Day brought back Distinguished Alum Randy Susskind from the class of 1985. The day started off with a sense of curiosity in the air. Each year's speaker has brought something completely different than the last one, students were excited to see what would be brought today.

Mr. Susskind was introduced by one of his former classmates who used the story of Susskind helping him up on his first day of practice as a metaphor for his character. Mr. Susskind started off his speech by talking about his time at Wyoming. He was very involved in school clubs, government, and athletics. I even learned that we had the same tennis coach!

Coming out of High School, Mr. Susskind had no idea what he wanted to study. He shared a fun little story that most students can relate to about how he declared himself a business major at a school that did not have a business program. He would attend Denison University and graduate with a BA in philosophy in 1989. He would then go on to attend Georgetown Law School where he graduated with his JD in 1994.

While living in DC, Mr. Susskind found himself working at the Department of Justice. His job involved sorting through letters from prisoners who were looking to appeal their sentencing. He described this job as *brainless*, yet it was his first exposure to the prison system and the injustices that went along with it. In his later years at law school, he was given more exposure to the prison system as he worked as a student attorney.

These experiences helped to propel Mr. Susskind into what he is best known for today, working at the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). At EJI, Mr. Susskind works as the Deputy Director and helps those who have been unjustly given the death sentence or incarcerated.

In describing his journey to where he is today, Mr. Susskind emphasized the idea that it is okay to be unsure about what you want to pursue in life. Through time and experiences, one will find what they are passionate about. This message is one that is even more impactful as a student who is thinking about the future and what being an adult will entail. When asked about the proudest moment of his career, Mr. Susskind responded by saying that his everyday work of being able to help others was the proudest moment. I think that this statement best sums up Mr. Susskind's character. He is a very humble and caring person whose work battles injustices that have been historically held up in our country. Fighting for something bigger than yourself is an achievement which everyone can take inspiration from.

At the end of my talk with Mr. Susskind, I asked him a couple of questions about Wyoming itself. The first question I asked was about how the education at Wyoming helped him the most. He responded by saying that the commitment to excellence he felt in the community pushed him to try and succeed. Along with this, I asked about any words of wisdom he had for the students of Wyoming. He encouraged the students to appreciate everything the community does for them and embody that commitment to excellence. Finally, when asked what this award meant to Mr. Susskind, he responded by saying it felt good to be recognized for his work.