

FALL 2025

COWBOY Legacy



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UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING FOUNDATION

Going Above and Beyond to Be Helpful

JOHN AND GINNA WALKER

John Walker grew up poor on a rural Alabama farm. He wasn't allowed to go to school until the fifth grade, although he'd been driving tractors and working the farm for years by then. Understandably, he struggled in school. He never dreamed he would attend college anywhere—much less at the University of Wyoming—but now at age 92, he and his wife Ginna look back on long successful years as hard-working educators and generous philanthropists.



John and Ginna Walker donated the above cabin, located near Encampment.

John's senior year of high school as he sat in study hall, the teacher asked him, "John, how would you like to go to college?" He was stunned. Turns out, this teacher's son was assistant football coach at UW. He put John through the paces and offered him a full scholarship to UW on the spot.

"I couldn't believe it," John says. "I just couldn't believe it." After a pause, he adds, "It's the best thing that ever happened to me. It made me."

That gamble paid off for UW in so many ways. John was part of the 1956 UW Athletics Hall of Fame football team that went undefeated, finishing the season sixteenth in the nation with an invitation to the Sun Bowl.

Going above and beyond to be helpful is a hallmark of both John and Ginna and of their careers. John earned a bachelor's and then a master's from UW in physical education teaching, and along the way he served UW cleaning the football stadium of snow, making \$35 a month. After managing the Saratoga Inn Golf Course during the summers, John worked at UW as UW Recreation bus driver, a physical education instructor, track coach, on the faculty senate, and many other roles. In 1987, John received the Hollan Award for off-campus teaching, and in 2016, he received College of Health Sciences Distinguished Alumni Award.

John retired in 1995 after 33 years at UW, his final position as an assistant professor. Ginna was three years away from retirement herself, but she retired as well. As with everything, they took the leap together.

During his time at UW, John taught continuing education classes to teachers from across the state. That's where he and

Ginna met—he was teaching an outdoor education class for teachers in Cheyenne, and a friend of Ginna's convinced her to take it. Ginna had grown up in Texas, earned her teaching degree at Baylor, and was teaching elementary school in Cheyenne.

The rest is history. John helped Ginna get over her fear of heights, and they fell in love on the racquetball court, marrying in 1983. Forty-two years later, they remain "quite a

team," Ginna says. "We work together so well," John adds. They both have smiles in their voices.

John is so grateful for the education and opportunities that UW has given him, and so he and Ginna decided to give back to UW and to pay it forward. Their first major gift was 58 acres of land near their home between Laramie and Cheyenne, which became the foundation for the John Walker Scholarship in Physical Education Teaching in Kinesiology and Health Promotion. The scholarship specifically supports students training to be physical education teachers. They have also supported the Department of Kinesiology and Health and the Cowboy Joe Club.

"We struggled for so many years and I didn't know how we were going to pay the grocery bill," John says. "Now we have enough money to give to help students." He adds that the thank you letters that they receive from students mean the world to them.

And they keep adding to this scholarship fund. Just as they established their scholarship with real estate, they are significantly enlarging it by donating their beautiful cabin near Encampment. They had originally considered including it as a gift in John's estate, but then they decided they wanted to see the impact during their lifetimes.

John and Ginna have built a rich and full life together and enriched all those around them—not least of all the University of Wyoming. "The university has never been better to anybody than it has been to me," John says. "It saved my life."

Consider supporting UW by making a gift of an asset. Contact Brett Befus at (307) 766-4259 or bbefus@uwyo.edu to discuss options.

What's your Wyoming Legacy?

Tax changes are coming in 2026, and they may affect how deductions work for charitable contributions. Some people will gain new opportunities to claim a deduction, while others may find that acting sooner helps them get the most value under today's rules.

- Learn how your generosity can make an impact under the new legislation. Contact Brett Befus at (307) 766-4259 or bbefus@uwyo.edu to explore charitable giving opportunities.

This summary is based on key provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, signed into law on July 4, 2025. It is not tax advice; please consult your tax advisor for guidance specific to your circumstances.



Did you know you can make a lasting impact at the University of Wyoming without writing a check? By donating real estate, such as a family home, vacation cabin, farm, or commercial property, you can create a legacy while also receiving valuable tax benefits.

- Receive a federal income tax charitable deduction
- Reduce or eliminate capital gains taxes
- Eliminate maintenance, property taxes, and insurance
- Avoid the hassle of selling—simply deed the property to UW

You can give real estate now or later. Some choose to make an outright gift today, while others include property in their will or living trust, and some give through a retained life estate. No matter the method, a real estate gift is a powerful way to support students and programs for generations to come.

- **OUTRIGHT GIFT**
You deed your real estate directly to the University of Wyoming Foundation, eliminating maintenance costs and property taxes while making an immediate impact.
- **GIFT IN A WILL OR LIVING TRUST**
You include a gift of real estate in your estate plans. Here is simple sample language you can share with your attorney or advisor:

"I give to the University of Wyoming Foundation (a nonprofit corporation located at 222 S 22nd Street, Laramie, Wyoming, or its successor), [insert address or description of property] to benefit the University of Wyoming generally [or as specifically described]."

You deed your property to the University of Wyoming Foundation now but retain the right to live there for the rest of your life. After your lifetime, the property will support the University of Wyoming and its students.

Contact Brett Befus at (307) 766-4259 or at bbefus@uwyo.edu. We can help you and your advisor find the option that's right for you.

We always recommend consulting with your tax professional or financial advisor when making a charitable gift.



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES



FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 2 LARAMIE, WY

**ACCOUNT NO 58
UW FOUNDATION
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
1000 E UNIVERSITY AVE
LARAMIE WY 82072-9801**



We want to hear from you!





 UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING
FOUNDATION
Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center
222 S. 22nd Street
Laramie, WY 82070

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- ☐ Please send me a free copy of the Guide to Planning a Will and Trust.
- ☐ UW is already included in my charitable plans, and I have not previously informed your office.

MAIL: Detach from newsletter, fold in half, and seal on the side opposite from fold.

CALL: (307) 766-4259 to speak directly to a UW representative.

ONLINE: Fill out the form online at: <https://gopokes.formstack.com/forms/legacy>.

Thank you to our Legacy Society members who have documented a legacy gift.

WHAT FRIENDSHIPS OR MENTORS FROM UW HAVE SHAPED YOUR LIFE THE MOST?

Legacy ^{COWBOY}

Legacy Match

Make an Impact Today by Documenting Your Planned Gift

When you document a planned gift to the University of Wyoming, you can direct matching funds to create an immediate impact on a cause that matters to you—such as scholarships or support for a specific college or program.

A pool of unrestricted matching funds is available on a first-come first-served basis for donors aged 60 or older who document a new planned gift. By completing a simple one-page form, 10% of the estimated future value of your future gift will be matched, up to \$10,000. This allows you to see the impact of your generosity today, as you direct this match funding to the area of your choice. This opportunity remains open until all matching funds are fully distributed.

Gifts eligible for Legacy Match include gifts in a will or trust, beneficiary designations, and many more options.

Legacy Match was established by the UW Foundation Board of Directors to help you increase the impact of your generosity.

Contact us for more information about how you can take advantage of this opportunity to increase the impact of your legacy.



CONTACT US

Brett Befus

Associate Vice President for
Development
(307) 766-4259
bbefus@uwyo.edu
www.uwyo.edu/giftplanning

