STAN **GRAD**

Distinguished UW Alumnus

Distinguished University of Wyoming Alumnus Stan Grad will always remember his UW math professor, Dorothy Stodola.

"She was spectacular, a great teacher who took the extra time and interest to get me through," Grad says. A native of Wisconsin, Stodola earned her degrees at Marquette and Stanford before teaching at UW for 30 years.

"She had a real unique way," Grad says. "She was short, stout, in her mid-40s, and her attitude was 'I'm not a mathematician—I'm a math teacher. I sympathize with the freshmen and sophomores and understand their difficulties when they don't want to be brilliant specialists doing research in the subject.' She always had a commonsense approach and helped me puzzle through the more complicated problems."

"I always had a challenge with math," Grad adds. "I never did well in school, period." You wouldn't know it by his long list of accomplishments in multiple industries.

Grad grew up in Alberta, Canada, helping neighbors baling hay and milking dairy cows, which fostered his love of cattle breeding. "I was so engrossed in the cattle business because, as a young boy working on a dairy farm, I loved cattle," he says. "I was so keen."

He earned a degree from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology—UW has had a long partnership with SAIT and its sister school, NAIT. "There was a group of us guys who grew up together," Grad says. "One of the fellows—we were talking one day—and he said, 'I'm looking to go to SAIT to take petroleum technology, and I said, 'What is that all about?' "

After SAIT Grad then worked in the oil fields of central Alberta looking after drilling rigs and service equipment for two years but then decided, along with six of his friends, to come to UW to earn a degree in petroleum engineering ('71). He says, "My experience at UW—what I liked about it—quite candidly is that it was small, I found it personal, you could dialogue with the teachers, and it's in a pretty part of the world."

Returning to Canada, Grad bought a quarter section in Alberta in 1972. This became Soderglen Ranches, the name of which Grad picked up during his time as a student at UW. The ranch, owned by him and his wife Jane, is one of the largest seedstock cattle operations in Canada. It raises purebred Black Angus, Red Angus, Simmental and Charolais and its own breeds CCM and Red and Black MAX. The ranch runs a breeding herd of 2,500 cows at three locations in southern Alberta that encompass 22,000 acres.

Concurrently, Grad had a long and distinguished career in the energy industry, founding a number of energy companies. He founded and served as president and CEO of Grad and Walker Energy Corp., which was bought by Crestar Energy in the 1990s. Grad had sold a world-record bull to Willard Walker, an early partner with Sam Walton (of Walmart fame). Grad and Walker became friends and then business partners. From that partnership, Grad and Walker Energy Corp. was established in 1986. Grad and Walker Energy was later sold to Crestar Energy in the late 1990s. After the sale, Grad went on to direct or chair additional energy companies across the world, including MAX Minerals, Standard Energy, Solana Energy, GT Energy (founding partner), Eaglewood Energy, Wellco and Canyon Technical Services, one of Canada's largest hydraulic fracturing companies.

A founding member of the Calgary Stampede Foundation, Grad also is heavily involved with the heavy horse pull, a centuries-old event in which two draft horses in harness pull twice to three times their combined body weight. "I love the big horses," Grad says. "A buddy of mine who I co-founded Canyon Technical with got me into them. He taught me how to be a teamster and how to drive the horses competitively."

Grad was heavily involved in the early days with Canada's Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS). His teenage daughter, Kristine, tragically died after a car accident in 1990, and so he has lent his long-term support to emergency medical transportation and treatment for accident victims in rural Alberta.

For his contributions as an entrepreneur and philanthropist, Grad received the Alberta Order of Excellence, the highest honor the Canadian province bestows. He also supports UW.

Grad credits hard work and lots of luck for his success. "If you've got the combination of the education and the drive and ambition, you can do great things," Grad says.

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