

Western Legislative Academy

Lawmakers Work Hard to Become Better Legislators

From the opening reception on the veranda of the Colorado Springs historic Penrose House to the closing dinner with Mark Twain, 39 state legislators from throughout the West joined together for the 2006 Western Legislative Academy. Offered by the Council of State Governments-WEST, the Academy was held June 12-15.

Participants came from both political parties, from urban and rural communities and from a dazzling array of professional backgrounds. In the short three and a half days spent in intensive training, this year's WLA participants took home new skills, polished old ones and developed valuable friendships with colleagues in sister states of the West.

Members of the Class of 2006 brought a high level of commitment to becoming better legislators, and it showed. For overall value, they rated the 2006 WLA 4.97 out of a possible 5, the best rating in the history of the program.

Participant satisfaction likely reflects how much of themselves class members invested in the WLA.

Each day the Academy began with sessions designed to build support for legislative institutions. Afterwards, lawmakers worked



2006 Western Legislative Academy "students" brought energy and enthusiasm to the classroom.

with experts in time management, negotiations, ethics, leadership and communications. Legislators also spent a half day at the U.S. Air Force Academy where they developed personality profiles and engaged in team building exercises.

WLA enjoys strong bipartisan support from legislative leaders in the region. In 2006, leaders and WLA alumni made 135 potential applicant suggestions. Seventy legislators eventually applied for the 39 slots available each year at the Academy. Because class size is limited, many qualified applicants could not be admitted.

Since its creation in 2000, WLA has graduated 263 Western legislators, many of whom have gone on to leadership positions in their states and beyond.

The 2007 Western Legislative Academy will take place November 5-8. Click on the WLA link at www.csqwest.org to download an application. For more information, call CSG-WEST at 916-553-4423.

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Profile of the 2006 WLA Class President: Idaho Representative Rich Wills



Idaho Rep. Rich Wills was elected 2006 class president by his peers.

When Rich Wills retired from the Idaho state police, both parties asked him to run for the legislature—an auspicious beginning for any politician. Wills was elected in 2002 to the Idaho House of Representatives where he serves today.

What makes this policeman-turned-legislator

stand out above the crowd? Colleagues call him a team player and a consensus builder. Wills says his career with the state police helped prepare him for his job in the legislature. He learned not to personalize issues, something that comes in very handy as a lawmaker. And he taught communications—a valuable skill in any legislator’s toolbox.

Wills also became a ventriloquist during his career in law enforcement and taught safety education through humor. Asked if there’s a place for humor in the legislature, Wills replied, “Big time—so long as it’s not at someone else’s expense.” When he introduced his first bill on the floor of the Idaho House, he brought along his dummy “Crash” to help him. Wills says that humor can de-escalate a situation in the legislative arena just as it does in law enforcement.

His biggest surprise as a freshman was that making an impact takes time. Now, with two terms under

his belt, the Idaho lawmaker offered a bit of advice to the newcomers coming behind him. You have to work with others and learn how to give in order to receive. “It’s all about collaboration,” said Wills. His personal mantra is: “Make promises sparingly, but keep them faithfully.”

What does Idaho lawmaker do when he’s not at the state capitol? Plenty. In fact, Wills could be the poster child for the citizen legislator. Home is Glens Ferry, Idaho—population 1400 located 70 miles east of Boise. Wills and his wife operate a dinner theater where they serve up melodramas and murder mysteries on summer nights. He does the outside cooking and the directing, his wife Connie handles the finances and family members pitch in wherever needed.

Wills now works as an on-call deputy for two Idaho counties. He also teaches communications and de-escalation techniques to city, county, state and federal officials. In his spare time, Wills is a proud father and grandfather and enjoys fishing and hunting.

In 2006, the Idaho representative was chosen to attend the CSG-WEST Western Legislative Academy, where his classmates elected him president. Wills summarized what the Academy experience meant to him in just a few words. “Nobody knew whether you were a D or R. We became a team with one purpose—to become better legislators,” he said.

Other lawmakers who have served as WLA class presidents are Nevada Assembly Member Heidi Gansert, New Mexico Representative Jose Campos, Nevada Assembly Member Kelvin Atkinson, Montana Representative Jim Keane, Alaska Senator Lesil McGuire and Nevada Senator Barbara Cegavske.

Special appreciation to the El Pomar Foundation and Penrose House that have become integral and invaluable to the CSG-WEST Western Legislative Academy. The Foundation’s continued investment in the WLA helps newer western legislators acquire the skills and networks to be more effective in public policy decisions. The campus environment created by the Penrose House and grounds contributes enormously to the overall success of the program. El Pomar Fellows serve as observers and analysts of the WLA evaluation process and are an unbiased resource for course corrections in the curriculum.

WLA Class of 2006

June 12-15, 2006 in Colorado Springs, Colorado



Photo courtesy of Lynn Bouitte Photography

Back row (left to right) John Hastert (WY Rep), Jim Kerr (CO Rep), Mac Sumner (OR Rep), Patrick Painter (UT Rep), Kevin Cameron (OR Rep), Bert Stedman (AK Sen), Michael Von Flatern (WY Sen), Carl Gatto (AK Rep), Susan Gerhardt (NV Asmbr), Steven Horsford (NV Sen), Hector Balderas (NM Rep), Robyn Discoll (MT Rep), Mark Wheatley (UT Rep)

2nd row (left to right) Richard Wills (ID Rep), Curtis Oda (UT Rep), Jeanne Windham (MT Rep), David Buri (WA Rep), Vernon Asbill (NM Sen), William A. Thomas, Jr. (AK Rep), John McGee (ID Sen), Larry Haler (WA Rep), Keith Gardner (NM Rep), Peter Wirth (NM Rep), Brooks Holcomb (NV Asmbr), John McComish (AZ Rep)

1st row (left to right) Timm Ormsby (WA Rep), Gary MacLaren (MT Rep), Dale Hall (CO Rep), Austin "Kit" Jennings (WY Sen), Eric Anderson (ID Rep), Nancy McLain (AZ Rep), Ann Kirkpatrick (AZ Rep), Julie Fisher (UT Rep), Judy Solano (CO Rep), Rida T.R. Cabanilla (HI Rep), Frank Henderson (ID Rep), Nancy Todd (CO Rep), Sara Gelser (OR Rep), Doug Whitsett (OR Sen)

SPECIAL THANKS TO 2006 WLA SPONSORS

CSG-WEST gratefully acknowledges the significant support provided to the Western Legislative Academy!

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The 2007 Western Legislative Academy will convene November 5-8. For information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Cheryl Lee Duvauchelle at 415-330-0312 or cduvauch@csg.org.



6 “Students”





Nevada Assembly Member **Heidi Gansert**, 2005 WLA class president, returned to Colorado Springs to welcome the Class of 2006.



Communications expert **Arch Lustberg** used humor and on-camera video taping to help lawmakers deliver better speeches and media interviews.



FranklinCovey trainer **Laurie Julian** worked with lawmakers on the "7 Habits of Highly Effective People."

Colorado Senator (and 2006 CSG-WEST chair) **Ron Teck** kept WLA'ers on time and on target throughout their Academy experience.



Former New Mexico **Speaker Raymond Sanchez** (top) and former Oregon Speaker **Larry Campbell** spoke to lawmakers about the do's and don'ts of effective legislators.



Rutgers University Professor **Alan Rosenthal**, a national authority on state legislatures, discussed what makes a good legislature.

Academy Faculty



Boise State University Professor **Gary Moncrief** reviewed changes in legislative institutions over the last 50 years.



Former Oregon legislator and mediation expert **Bryan Johnston** taught legislators the keys to successful and principled negotiations.



Denver NBC commentator and former Denver Post bureau chief **Fred Brown** offered practical tips for working with statehouse journalists.



Ethicist **Jack Marshall** used real-life case studies to review the "secrets of virtuous lawmakers."



Time management trainer **Pam Vaccaro** helped lawmakers understand how to focus their attention on what really matters.



Former US Air Force trainers Ret. Lt. Col. **Danny Miller** and Ret. Chief Master Sergeant **Lisa Best** administered personality profiles and team building exercises to WLA class members.



WLA Alumni 2000-2006

ALASKA

Class of 2000

Fmr. Rep. Eric Croft
Rep. John Harris
U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski
Sen. Gary Wilken

Class of 2001

Fmr. Sen. Gretchen Guess
Sen. Lesil McGuire
Sen. Gary Stevens
Rep. Peggy Wilson

Class of 2002

Rep. John Coghill, Jr.
Fmr. Rep. Hugh Fate
Rep. Mary Kapsner
Rep. Kevin Meyer

Class of 2003

Fmr. Rep. Jim Holm
Rep. Ralph Samuels
Sen. Tom Wagoner

Class of 2004

Rep. Nancy Dahlstrom
Rep. David Guttenberg
Rep. Paul Seaton
Fmr. Sen. Ralph Seekins

Class of 2005

Sen. Charlie Huggins
Rep. Mike Kelly
Rep. Kurt Olson

Class of 2006

Rep. Carl Gatto
Sen. Bert Stedman
Rep. William A. Thomas Jr.

ARIZONA

Class of 2000

Fmr. Sen. Herb Guenther
U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell

Class of 2001

Sen. Meg Burton Cahill
Fmr. Sen. Robert Cannell

Class of 2002

Sen. Timothy Bee
Fmr. Sen. Toni Hellon
Sen. Tom O'Halleran

Class of 2003

Rep. Jennifer Burns
Rep. Olivia Cajero Bedford
Rep. Phil Lopes
Sen. Thayer Verschoor

Class of 2004

U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords
Rep. Bill Konopnicki
Sen. James Waring

Class of 2005

Rep. David Bradley
Sen. Albert Hale
Fmr. Rep. Russ Jones

Class of 2006

Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick
Rep. John McComish
Rep. Nancy McLain

CALIFORNIA

Class of 2000

The late Asmbr. Marco Firebaugh
Class of 2001
Sen. Jenny Oropeza

Class of 2004

Sen. Jeff Denham

COLORADO

Class of 2000

Fmr. Sen. Jim Dyer
Fmr. Rep. Carl Miller
Fmr. Spkr. Lola Spradley
Fmr. Sen. Ron Teck

COLORADO *continued*

Class of 2001

Fmr. Rep. Jim Snook
Class of 2002
Rep. Alice Borodkin
Rep. Mary Hodge

Class of 2003

Rep. Debbie Stafford
Sen. Abel Tapia

Class of 2004

Fmr. Rep. Ramey Johnson
Rep. Raymond Rose
Sen. Paula Sandoval

Class of 2005

Sen. Jim Isgar
Rep. Cheri Jahn
Class of 2006
Rep. Debbie Benefield

Class of 2006

Rep. Jim Riesberg
Fmr. Rep. Dale Hall
Rep. Jim Kerr
Rep. Judy Solano
Rep. Nancy Todd

HAWAII

Class of 2000

Fmr. Rep. Emily Auwae
Sen. Lorraine Inouye
Fmr. Rep. Sol Kaho'ohalahala
Rep. Hermina Morita

Class of 2001

Sen. J. Kalani English
Fmr. Rep. Helene Hale
Fmr. Rep. Mindy Jaffe

Class of 2002

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim
Sen. Russell Kokubun
Fmr. Rep. David Pendleton

Class of 2003

Fmr. Sen. Melodie Aduja
Rep. Cindy Evans
Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu

Class of 2004

Rep. Lynn Finnegan
Rep. Scott Nishimoto
Rep. Glenn Wakai

Class of 2005

Rep. Pono Chong
Sen. Shan Tsutsui
Rep. Kyle Yamashita

Class of 2006

Rep. Rida T.R. Cabanilla

IDAHO

Class of 2000

Sen. Don Burtenshaw
Fmr. Rep. Steve Smylie
Sen. Joe Stegner

Class of 2001

Rep. Darrell Bolz
Sen. John Goedde
Sen. Patti Anne Lodge
Fmr. Rep. Gary Young

Class of 2002

Fmr. Sen. Skip Brandt
Rep. R.J. "Dick" Harwood
Sen. Brent Hill

Class of 2003

Rep. Dell Raybould
Class of 2004
Rep. Sharon Block
Sen. Curt McKenzie

Class of 2005

Rep. Elaine Smith
Class of 2006
Rep. Joseph Cannon
Sen. Dick Compton

Rep. Robert Ring
Rep. Mack Shirley

IDAHO *continued*

Class of 2005

Rep. Clifford Bayer
Sen. Tim Corder
Rep. John Rusche

Class of 2006

Rep. Eric Anderson
Rep. Frank Henderson
Sen. John McGee
Rep. Richard Wills

MONTANA

Class of 2000

Lt. Gov. John Bohlinger
Sen. Kim Gillan
Fmr. Rep. George Golie
Fmr. Rep. Monica Lindeen

Class of 2001

Fmr. Rep. Linda Holden
Rep. Joey Jayne
Fmr. Rep. Mark Noennig
Sen. Don Ryan

Class of 2002

Rep. Jim Keane
Sen. Frank Smith

Class of 2003

Sen. Rick Laible
Rep. Michael Lange
Sen. Trudi Schmidt

Class of 2004

Sen. Ken Hansen
Rep. Scott Mendenhall

Class of 2005

Rep. Elsie Amutzen
Rep. Dennis Himmelberger
Sen. Lane Larson

Class of 2006

Rep. Robyn Driscoll
Rep. Gary MacLaren
Fmr. Rep. Jeanne Windham

NEVADA

Class of 2000

Sen. Mark Amodei
Sen. Barbara Cegavske
Asmbr. Jerry Claborn
Asmbr. Ellen Koivisto

Class of 2001

Fmr. Asmbr. Don Gustavson
Asmbr. John Ocegueda
Asmbr. Debbie Smith

Class of 2003

Asmbr. Marcus Conklin
Asmbr. Kelvin Atkinson
Asmbr. William Horne

Class of 2004

Fmr. Asmbr. Rod Sherer
Asmbr. Valerie Weber

Class of 2005

Asmbr. Moises Denis
Asmbr. Heidi Gansert
Asmbr. Marilyn Kirkpatrick
Sen. John Jay Lee

Class of 2006

Asmbr. Susan Gerhardt
Fmr. Asmbr. Brooks Holcomb
Sen. Steven Horsford

NEW MEXICO

Class of 2000

Rep. Mary Helen Garcia
Fmr. Rep. Ron Godbey
Rep. Thomas Taylor

Class of 2001

Rep. Brian Moore
Sen. Mary Kay Papen
Rep. Al Park

NEW MEXICO *continued*

Class of 2002

Sen. Diane Snyder
Rep. Patricia Lundstrom
Sen. Richard Martinez
Sen. Lidio Rainaldi

Class of 2003

The late Rep. Raymond Ruiz
Rep. Irvin Harrison
Sen. Gay Kernan
Rep. Jane Powdrell-Culbert

Class of 2004

Rep. Janice Arnold-Jones
Rep. Jose Campos
Rep. Andy Nuñez

Class of 2005

Rep. Teresa Zanetti
Rep. Joni Gutierrez
Rep. Kathy McCoy
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino

Class of 2006

Sen. Vernon Asbill
NM Auditor Hector Balderas
Rep. Keith Gardner
Rep. Peter Wirth

OREGON

Class of 2000

Rep. Bob Jensen
Sen. Vicki Walker

Class of 2001

Fmr. Rep. Janet Carlson
Sen. Laurie Monne Anderson

Class of 2002

Fmr. Rep. Vic Backlund
Rep. Phil Barnhart
Rep. Jackie Dingfelder

Class of 2003

Rep. Vicki Berger
Rep. Linda Flores
Rep. Mitch Greenlick
Rep. Mike Schaufler

Class of 2004

Fmr. Rep. Gordon Anderson
Rep. George Gilman
Sen. Frank Morse

Class of 2005

Rep. Larry Galizio
Rep. Betty Komp
Rep. Andy Olson

Class of 2006

Rep. Kevin Cameron
Rep. Sara Gelser
Rep. Mac Sumner
Sen. Doug Whitsett

UTAH

Class of 2000

Sen. Peter Knudson
Class of 2001
Sen. Patricia Jones
Sen. Carlene Walker

Class of 2002

Fmr. Rep. James Ferrin
Rep. Neil Hansen
Rep. Merlynn Newbold
Fmr. Rep. J. Morgan Philpot

Class of 2003

Rep. Brad Dee
Rep. Michael Morley
Fmr. Sen. David Thomas

Class of 2004

Rep. Gregg Buxton
Rep. Todd Kiser
Rep. Rosalind McGee

UTAH *continued*

Class of 2005

Rep. Tim Cosgrove
Rep. Lorie Fowlke
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove

Class of 2006

Rep. Julie Fisher
Rep. Curtis Oda
Rep. Patrick Painter
Rep. Mark Wheatley

WASHINGTON

Class of 2000

Fmr. Rep. Carolyn Edmonds
Sen. Jim Honeyford
Sen. Linda Evans Parlette

Class of 2001

Rep. Glenn Anderson
Rep. Bruce Chandler
Rep. Mark Miloscia

Class of 2002

Rep. Mike Armstrong
Rep. Sam Hunt
Rep. Kirk Pearson

Class of 2003

Sen. Dale Brandland
Sen. Mike Hewitt
Rep. Dawn Morrell

Class of 2004

Fmr. Rep. Beverly Woods
Class of 2005
Rep. Dan Newhouse
Rep. Ed Orcutt

Class of 2006

Rep. Barbara Bailey
Rep. Judy Clibborn
Rep. Bob Hasegawa
Sen. Derek Kilmer

Class of 2006

Rep. David Buri
Rep. Larry Haler
Rep. Timm Ormsby

WYOMING

Class of 2000

Rep. Pete Illoway
Rep. Colin Simpson
Class of 2001
Rep. Jerry Ikel

Class of 2002

Rep. Thomas Lockhart
Rep. David Miller

Class of 2003

Rep. Sandra Meyer
Rep. Bill Thompson

Class of 2004

Rep. John Barrasso
Rep. Stan Cooper
Rep. Liz Gentile
Rep. Elaine Harvey

Class of 2005

Rep. Rosie Berger
Rep. Marty Martin
Rep. David Edwards

Class of 2006

Rep. Kermit Brown
Rep. Thomas Lubnau II
Rep. Loraine Quarberg
Sen. Charles Townsend

Class of 2006

Sen. John Hastert
Sen. Austin "Kit" Jennings
Sen. Michael Von Flatern

GUAM

Class of 2000

Fmr. Sen. Marcel Camacho