

Lenders to former students of WNU should have been sued, too!

Contributing in the success to rid Wyoming of degree sellers brings great satisfaction but there were other villains in the stain put on the state of Wyoming by those bums.

And the litigation slogging through the court here in Cheyenne does nothing to shed light on the accomplices in the years long fleecing of unsuspecting "students" of degree sellers like Kennedy-Western University and its successor in name, Warren National University.

The State of Wyoming was as much a villain as the founders and operators of those two bottom-feeding, hope-destroying purveyors of their own form of porn - an unaccredited degree.

Wyoming made it possible for some of those scurrilous operations to get a foothold in the industry - or to retain it. For some misguided reason, the state thought businesses who moved more often than on-the-lam bank robbers, were good business for a state lacking in employers. But, the bums had few employees. They operated out of 200 sq. ft. basement and 2nd story offices with a single employee who answered the phone and made bank deposits, sending the ill-gotten money to scammers who lived elsewhere.

Wyoming legislators and Department of Education employees took the junkets offered and fought on behalf of the degree sellers survival. They accepted hard-to-access tickets to Denver Broncos football games and spoke at the "graduation" ceremonies of pitiful operations like Preston University.

When pressure began to be applied for the State to distance itself from the degree selling businesses by requiring them to be in the process of gaining legitimate accreditation by an accrediting firm recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, legislators fought to give the degree sellers TWENTY YEARS to gain that accreditation. How many more junkets might they have taken in that twenty years? When the new law was passed, they were given but five years to become accredited and the process had to be started almost immediately.

After many years of providing a safe haven for the crooks, much like St. Paul, Minnesota did for the mobsters out of Chicago decades back, Wyoming came

into conformance with almost every other state in the United States. Wyoming finally said, by its actions to require accreditation, "we don't want your kind in our midst any longer."

But, in the years of romancing the bums, thousands more Americans and those in foreign countries were taken in by what appeared to them to be a legitimate operation from Wyoming, USA. The degree sellers presented themselves as being "approved" by the State of Wyoming by virtue of a license to do business - a license to steal from unsuspecting and trusting "students" from around the country and the world.

And, instead of doing anything to protect the naive and gullible from around the globe who relied on Wyoming to protect their educational pursuit, Wyoming did nothing. Instead of requiring degree selling businesses like Kennedy-Western (later Warren National), Preston University, Paramount, Newport International, and every "American" name imaginable to put up a sufficient bond to cover the losses that would eventually be suffered by students who had bought worthless pieces of paper they thought were college degrees and/or were in the middle of such a pursuit, the State of Wyoming required

State of Wyoming will not suffer any financial loss - just a loss of reputation that can never be regained. I hear from former students and/or members of their families who ask the simple question repeatedly: "How could Wyoming do this to us?"

A good question that will remain forever unanswered.

And, a challenge that will go unrewarded. Wyoming is allowed to participate in the fraud - without financial punishment.

The worst part is that the State didn't make any money on the deal. Allowing those thieves to operate using a Wyoming address brought but a pittance to the state treasury. For pennies a student for Wyoming, the degree sellers scammed thousands from each student. If you're going to sell your reputation, you should at least be paid handsomely for the sale. Wyoming wasn't. Mere pennies.

With K-WU/WNU closed and, apparently now inaccessible, former students are still being required to repay loans made to buy the degrees they are finding worthless. Those who were in the process of completing their "studies" have nowhere to turn. And the State of Wyoming has no intention of helping them gain redress.

once reputable lender, Wells Fargo, was without value.

Obviously, former students are not blameless. It has been all over the news for years that some of these rascals were selling degrees without requiring real educational effort. And the issue of diploma mills is not a new one. With more due diligence, many students would have avoided the nightmarish situation in which they now find themselves.

In Cheyenne, the local office of Wells Fargo is only steps east of the basement offices used by Warren National. And the Cheyenne Herald itself has been writing stories about degree sellers since 2005. For a period of time, the Cheyenne Herald was available at that Wells Fargo office. They knew what was going on - that Warren National was not a true "college" or university. They knew WNU had a small amount of office space in the basement of a former J.C. Penney store. Wells Fargo knew that WNU was selling paper, not providing education. Yet, this Wells Fargo office did nothing to cease loans to creditworthy students who could not borrow elsewhere for this bogus degree and were ineligible for Pell Grants and other educational funding because WNU was an unaccredited degree seller.



only a \$10,000 bond - regardless of how many current and past students one of the nefarious businesses might have had.

Kennedy-Western / Warren National charged almost that much to EACH student enrolled. When the scurrilous operation closed their doors after failing to gain accreditation, the most money available for the cheated former students is \$10,000. At this date, almost 200 former students have joined in the lawsuit against the greatest abuse of public trust in Wyoming since the Teapot Dome Scandal. And, the similarities with public officials being right in the middle of the betrayal of public trust is striking.

Because of governmental immunity, the

The first response made to students who were actively pursuing a degree from Warren National, oblivious to the fact it was worthless, from the State of Wyoming was, basically, "we are not responsible."

Many less shady businesses have more controls placed on them than did the degree sellers that stunk up our air. And, had used car dealers sold vehicles for which they could not deliver titles, they would have been criminally charged. Not so the degree sellers.

As complicit in this fraudulent undertaking as the State of Wyoming were lenders. Two in particular. Wells Fargo and Sallie Mae.

The logo and message above links one of the most familiar lenders. Wells Fargo, with an already poor reputation as an "educational" lender, readily loaned money to students or their parents. Loans which were to be used to buy a "degree" Wells Fargo knew, or should have known, was unaccredited and of little more value than a gag degree you could see advertised on a matchbook cover.

Major lenders were provided bailout money from the federal government to cover their mistakes. But these lenders were not held responsible to make good on bad loans they made to those who thought a degree sold with the approval of the State of Wyoming and funded by a

Wells Fargo was just as complicit as the getaway driver from the bank robbery.

Yet, they have gone unpunished and continue to demand repayment of the bad and unwarranted loans they made to purchase something with no value.

Wells Fargo and Sallie Mae are probably the two most frequent lenders mentioned to me. And, you can see from the above presentation on their website that they were trolling for students for Warren National University. A marriage made in hell.

If a company set up operation in Wyoming and sold unregistered securities, both the State and SEC would take action. But in the case of lending money for a borrower to buy a nonexistent education, no one seems liable and no one seems to care - no one in an official capacity, that is. Borrowers care.

Borrowers are being harassed for repayment and when they tell the lender, "but, the 'college' isn't there anymore and I didn't receive the education or degree they promised," the lender could care less. As guilty of fraud in the inducement as the so-called "university" itself, Wells Fargo and Sallie Mae will continue to demand these tainted loans be repaid.

Wells Fargo is the name sullied but the parent is really Norwest Bank of Minneapolis, particularly embarrassing to me.

Grizzlies seek host families

The Cheyenne Grizzlies collegiate summer baseball program is in need of host families for players during the 2010 season.



Host families provide a place for players to stay for June or July, or both, and provide a support network for these young men who may be far from home. It is a great opportunity to host a role model and make a friend for life. Host families receive season tickets for hosting.

Please visit the Grizzlies website (www.cheyennegrizzlies.com) or call 631-7337 for more information.

This day in baseball history ... May 11, 1972 -- The San Francisco Giants traded Willie Mays to the New Mets for a right-handed pitcher no one ever heard of and \$50,000 cash.