

Ellie Cameron
Client Personality Profile

Board president leads WRCA and Wyoming Legislature through service

Last November, the Amarillo Civic Center was packed shoulder to shoulder in the concourse before each performance of the 2025 Working Ranch Cowboys Association World Championship Ranch Rodeo.

But just days before, the WRCA staff and board were the only people around. They arrived early to finish preparation for an event that the community looks forward to throughout the year. WRCA Board of Directors President and Wyoming State Rep. JD Williams was among them.

“I enjoy the WRCA because it’s a ranchy deal, and everybody’s there filling a hole, just like you would in the country,” Williams said. “When you get a chance to work with those people, it’s an opportunity and a privilege really. I’ll go out of my way to work with people of character and that’s one of the main reasons why I love the WRCA so much.”

The legislator and Four Three Land and Cattle Manger is a third-generation rancher and Wyoming native. Aside from time working on the Matador Ranch in Kansas and Diamond A Ranch in Arizona, Williams has always called Wyoming home.

He has served on the WRCA board since 2022, working to preserve the working ranch cowboy community’s heritage.

Williams’ experience with the WRCA began when he would travel to compete in the open ranch bronc riding. Eventually, his ranch rodeo team would qualify to compete in the championship.

“It was really good for my cowboys,” Williams said. “It doesn’t matter how handy you are, there’s somebody handier. And likewise, if they’re mounted better, they’re going to beat you ... it raised the bar for us.”

Now, as president of the WRCA board, instead of goals for the championship, Williams has goals for the association, preserving the original culture that made them successful in the first place.

Williams said the current board stands “on the shoulders of giants,” with a history of great leadership. He said it is the ranch culture that makes everyone want to attend the WRCA’s World Championship Ranch Rodeo, and it is a challenge to keep that reputation and atmosphere while growing as much as the WRCA has.

“You have to be deliberate and disciplined to keep it from turning into just another horse event,” Williams said.

In the future, Williams said it will only be more imperative to preserve the ranching culture and the WRCA plays a key role in that mission, reminding people of their roots in a world where few are involved in the cowboy community.

“It’s refreshing to go to a ranch rodeo and remember the finer points of your life,” Williams said. “I know I sure wish I was at a ranch rodeo some of these days when I’m sitting here before the House of Representatives at 1:30 in the morning.”

Williams was appointed as a replacement for Wyoming’s District 2 Representative in 2021. He refused the first invitation to apply but promised to help find a different candidate. He did agree eventually, but rather than send in a resume he did not have, he submitted a list of nearly 20 neighbors.

“They’ll shoot straight with you and tell you if I’m worth my salt,” Williams said he told the committee.

He was chosen to serve the remainder of the term and even ran for re-election in 2022. He lost by 12 votes. Williams said he went home, believing it meant he could move on from politics.

“I don’t have any political aspirations, you know? All I ever want to do is punch cows,” Williams said.

A year after leaving Cheyenne, Williams said his phone began ringing. His former constituents wanted him back in office. So, he ran again and this time won the 2024 election by about 300 votes.

“It’s never a convenient time to serve, and I’d much rather be at home,” Williams said. “But on the other hand, it’s our responsibility to stand in the gap.”

Williams said he spends his winters at the capital, not because he is a politician chasing votes for the next election, but instead to serve as a statesman who is preparing the way for the next generation.

“Some people think being a legislator is a place of power, but for me it’s a place of service,” Williams said.

He said his success as a leader can be attributed to a willingness to show up and work hard, paired with a desire to serve.

As Four Three’s manager, WRCA board president, and Wyoming’s District 2 Representative, Williams said the highest honor of his life is being a good neighbor to those around him.

“The buckles, trophies and plaques, those are all nice, but I’m here because I’m a good neighbor,” Williams said. “That’s my reputation, that’s how I operate, and number one, that’s how you live your faith.”