Ronald R. Zideck ‘59 (accounting) is a third-generation Nevadan who proudly attended local schools, including the University of Nevada, Reno. He had an illustrious 30-year career in public accounting, retiring as a managing partner from Reno’s Grant Thornton LLP in 1997. Following his retirement, he served as director of planned giving at the University and, since 2006, has been the vice president of business development for the Whittier Trust Company.

Throughout his career, Zideck has remained committed to community involvement and economic diversification in northern Nevada. His belief in strong relationships between Nevada business, education and government leads his active involvement and support of the University and many other community organizations and businesses, including the arts, banking, college preparatory education, economic development, gaming and health care.

Zideck is a University President’s Medalist (1991), a recipient of the Nevada Society of Certified Public Accountants’ Public Service Award (1995), was selected as a Laureate to the Junior Achievement’s Northern Nevada Business Leaders’ Hall of Fame (1996) and received the Nevada Alumni Association’s professional achievement (1997) and University service (2007) awards. He currently serves on the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation Board of Trustees and its executive committee, along with being a member of the Foundation’s Planned Giving Advisory Board and the University’s Legislative Steering Committee.

What is your fondest memory from your days at Nevada?

My parents’ financial situation required me to be employed in order to attend college. I lived at home, but still needed to work approximately 30 hours each week to cover tuition, books and other costs. I regret not having the opportunity to be involved with campus activities while attending college. However, I believe I am making up for it now. My fondest memory was my senior year when I was fortunate enough to graduate in four years, considering my work schedule. My senior year was also special since it was the first time during my academic years that my brother Bill ‘61 (accounting) and I were able to be enrolled at the same school and attend classes together.

What have you done that you are most proud of?

I am most proud of achieving the ability to reach and maintain a good balance in my life. In my mind, a good balance includes your family, your career and your community. I believe that your family should always be your first priority and I am fortunate to have a supportive wife, Mary Liz, a great step-son, Lance, and an outstanding daughter, Erica ‘99 (education).

While family remained my first priority, I still was able to achieve a rewarding career in public accounting with the firm Grant Thornton, LLP. I joined the firm in 1963 and retired in 1997. This career also provided me with a solid base allowing me to participate in the community and offered me a meaningful life after retirement.

And finally, I am proud of my community involvement. I am a firm believer that one must always give back and never forget the many people and organizations that have helped us during our lives. I love this continued involvement, especially the time I am able to provide to the University.

What advice would you give someone just starting out after college?

My advice to graduates would be to stay involved with the University and active in the community. Having a degree will not necessarily guarantee a successful and rewarding career.

Community involvement enables you to grow and improve your personal life and work life. Each person needs to have the right amount of balance in his or her life. Find the balance that is right for you.

Ronald Zideck in his Reno home.