

July 11, 2007

ITEM 136-1005-R0707

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Journalism upon Sharon Barrett; The University of Montana-Missoula

THAT:

The faculty of The University of Montana School of Journalism recommends that retired professor Sharon Barrett be conferred Emeritus status.

EXPLANATION:

Professor Barrett is retiring after 25 years at The University of Montana. She joined the journalism faculty in September 1981, the first woman in the school's then 67-year history. Typewriters and carbon paper were still in use. But those tools, like sexist attitudes about women's roles in the media, were being replaced. Now, computers, the internet and on-line media are the order of the day, and women are an integral part of the profession of journalism. During her tenure at the University of Montana, Professor Barrett served as a role model for women in journalism. Before coming to the university, she was one of the few women in American journalism to hold the position of city editor in a newsroom. She was also one of the first women editorial and opinion writers in the U.S. media.

In addition to the gender experiences she brought to the University, Professor Barrett also added to the breadth and depth of her courses her experiences working in journalism in Latin America. During her tenure at UM, she had two Fulbright lectureships in journalism: one at the University of Lima, Peru, in fall 1987, and one at the University ORT of Montevideo, Uruguay, in spring 2003. In summer 1996, she returned to Peru to work with Peruvian journalists, and in the fall of the following year to Colombia. She is fluent in Spanish, and in addition to her Fulbright work, during a leave from UM, worked for *El Norte*, a Spanish language daily in Monterrey, Mexico, a paper that, at the time, the Wall Street Journal called the best paper in Mexico.

In keeping with the Journalism School's belief that faculty should practice what they teach, Professor Barrett worked summers as an assistant editor on the foreign desk of the *Washington Post*, wrote book reviews for the *Chicago Daily News* and later the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and published freelance magazine articles. Such work added to her credentials as a teacher of opinion writing, copy editing, and

freelance magazine writing. And the work paid off. It has always been an aim, for example, in her magazine course, that her students get articles published in national and/or regional magazines. In fall semester 06, of the 21 students in Freelance Magazine Writing, 12 of them, by the time the semester ended, had articles accepted for publication.

Throughout the 25 years Professor Barrett has taught at The University of Montana, she has introduced new courses, modified old ones (especially during the university's switch from quarters to semesters) and helped build the journalism school's internship program, which now requires all students to have a journalism internship before graduating. This has resulted in students being placed in media all over the world and at some of the world's best – e.g., *The Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*). Professor Barrett also has served on innumerable committees and worked on many university and community projects. Her teaching has included workshops and seminars in both university and non-university venues.

Professor Barrett has received three merits during her tenure, and in 2002, received The University of Montana's Distinguished Teacher Award.

Several years ago the university published a brochure titled "University of Montana Faculty Highlights" which featured 18 UM faculty. Sharon Barrett was one of the 18. In the brochure's introduction, President George Dennison wrote: "This collection of brief profiles focuses upon 18 faculty members who exemplify the tradition of excellence that began at the University of Montana with its founding in 1893....The faculty members featured here represent their 400 colleagues well and, through their achievements, provide concrete evidence of the health and vitality of the university."

As an Emeritus professor, Sharon Barrett will keep abreast, as she has always done, with the changes in journalism, and will continue to represent her colleagues well.