

July 11, 2007

ITEM 136-1006-R0707

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Arts and Humanities upon Harry Fritz, Professor of History, College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Montana-Missoula

THAT:

On the occasion of his retirement from the Department of History at The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation to Professor Harry Fritz for his years of dedicated and valued service by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION:

Harry graduated from Missoula County High School in 1956. After spending four years as a chemistry major at Dartmouth College, he completely reversed course by completing a Master's Degree in history at UM. Properly focused on what would be his life's work, he went to Washington University in St. Louis for a Ph.D. To the four-decades-long good fortune of UM, the native son returned to Missoula, where he became one of the institution's premier lecturers. Teaching approximately one thousand students per year in the U.S. survey, Montana history, and his heavily subscribed upper-division courses, he has been a workhorse beyond compare. Generations of UM students have praised him for the wit, verve, and color of his lectures. The flourishing state of the History Department, with its strong enrollments and high number of majors is in large part a monument to his gift for communicating his love of history to the multitudes of students he has taught over the years.

Harry served two long stints as the chairman of the History Department, while teaching a full complement of courses and advising some eighty students every semester at a time when the departmental average for advisees was around twenty. His commitment to the students, in and out of the classroom, has been absolute. Addressing the in-coming freshmen in 2005, he explained his student-oriented university teaching philosophy. He told the audience that without them nothing that we do here could be accomplished. Therefore, we owe the students our supreme efforts.

The magnitude of Harry's service record exceeds the limits of even the most capacious testimonial. As a UM

representative to the state and the nation, he has performed prodigies. A one-man acting troupe and speakers' bureau, he has been the public face of the History Department. Appreciative audiences of school children and history buffs have thrilled to his wonderful presentations on Abe Lincoln and Lewis and Clark. With wit and learning, he magnificently has represented the school on countless civic and educational occasions. He also served in the Montana legislature as a state representative from 1985 to 1989 and as a senator from 1991 to 1995.

Harry's books and articles constitute an important body of research work. His edited anthologies include *Montana and the West: Essays in Honor of K. Ross Toole* (1984), with Rex C. Myers; *The Montana Heritage: An Anthology of Historical Essays* (1992), with Robert R. Swartout, Jr.; and *Montana Legacy: Essays on History, People, and Place* (2002), with Mary Murphy and Robert Swartout, Jr. The two books that he wrote, *Montana: Land of Contrast* (1984, rev. ed. 2001) and *The Lewis and Clark Expedition* (2004), established his credentials as a leading authority on the history of the state. Moreover, his "Best Books about Montana" surveys of 1982 and 2002 for *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, constitute a major contribution to our cultural history.

For Harry's manifold scholarly accomplishments, he received the Governor's Humanities Award in 2003. The following year, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education named him the CASE Montana Professor of the Year. These prestigious career awards remind us that his varied gifts take in the whole range of requirements for success as a university professor.

The History Department is honored to recommend Harry Fritz for Emeritus status.