

March 5-6, 2015

ITEM 166-2707-R0315

Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Educational Theory and Practice upon Sandra A. Rietz; Montana State University Billings

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Sandra Rietz from the faculty of Montana State University Billings, the faculty wishes to extend its appreciation for her 41 years of dedicated and valued service to the University, the Department of Educational Theory and Practice, College of Education, and the State of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred on her by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Sandra A. Rietz began her tenure with Eastern Montana College in 1974 as ABD. She subsequently completed her doctoral work from the University of Colorado 1976. She soon distinguished herself as a scholar in the areas of Reading Theory and Oral Narrative, and quickly rose to the highest ranks as a well-respected scholar in this discipline. Her efforts to describe the synergistic relationship between Reading Theory and oral expression has been a significant focus in her career. In addition, the relational approach first proposed by Professor Rietz has helped guide the College of Education itself, in that our own focus is neither purely linguistic, nor is it purely scientific or mathematical. In many ways, her leadership has prevented our college from becoming hopelessly entrenched in either theoretical camp.

Professor Rietz has contributed a large body of work to the scholarship of literacy education. She has coauthored three major books, written book chapters, chapters in monographs, proprietary documents for schools and the Department of the Interior and has edited several respected volumes, not the least of which is her own textbook, which she has scrupulously and regularly updated to reflect the emerging impact of content that she has proposed. She has presented over one hundred times at conferences, delivered eleven keynote addresses and nine papers, conducted thirty-nine preconference institutes and workshops, has contributed over fifty formal and many more local storytelling performances and engaged in numerous consults to schools, other educational agencies and the federal government. Dr. Rietz has secured \$24,600,000.00 of funded grants in her career. Many of these were specific to the literacy requirements of high need schools and native populations.

We are indebted to Professor Rietz's foresight and historical perspective, which has helped to guide our college for many years. Professor Rietz has also carefully contributed in essential ways to curricular development, instructional innovation, and departmental and university governance. For example, throughout her career, she instituted a prophetic renovation of the curriculum that led to the development of a more structured and efficient educational model that exposes our students to all sides of the scholarly debate. This strategy may have had the greatest impact on our undergraduate majors, many of whom practice their critical thinking skills. Her active (and avid) mentoring of Graduate Students (via her role as Graduate Advisor) ensures that they, too, have an understanding of not only the function of literacy scholarship, but of the many issues they will face as they mature in the profession. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, our department has much to be proud of: our students who became professionals like her have emulated her example on several fronts - in part, because Professor Rietz's

students have carried her reforms with them. As a result of her contributions, her students and colleagues credit her with raising the general level of discourse and inquiry in the field.

Last but not least, Professor Rietz has been an exemplary citizen of the university, serving on a plethora of committees in the College of Education and campus-wide and representing the college for several terms on the University Academic Senate. It is with great pride that we request emerita status for our colleague, Sandra Rietz.

ATTACHMENTS

None