

March 10-11, 2022

**ITEM 199-2002-R0322**

**Request for Authorization to Award an Honorary Doctorate to Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas;  
Montana State University**

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**THAT**

In recognition of many career achievements and the distinction brought to the Montana University System as an alumnus, the Board of Regents grants the Montana State University the authority to confer an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas.

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**EXPLANATION**

Born and raised in Bozeman, Montana, where his father was a longtime faculty member at Montana State University, Judge Sidney Thomas was educated entirely in Montana schools. As an undergraduate at MSU with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications, he served as a Student Regent to the Montana University System Board of Regents. Following his undergraduate degree from Montana State, he obtained his Juris Doctor from the University of Montana Andrew Blewitt School of Law.

Judge Sidney Thomas was a partner in the Billings firm of Bellingham, Longo and Mather, and served as an adjunct instructor of law at Rocky Mountain College from 1982-1995. Appointed as a judge of the 9th Circuit Court by President Bill Clinton, Judge Thomas was 42 years old when he received his commission on January 4, 1996, to oversee nine western states. As a judge of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Thomas arranged for 9th circuit hearings to be conducted in Montana. Prior to that, the circuit had held one hearing in Montana's history.

Judge Thomas has brought great distinction to Montana State University and the state of Montana. He has served the constituents of Montana, the states within the 9th circuit of appeals, and our nation with dedication and diligence. It would be a tremendous honor to bestow Judge Sidney Thomas an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters from Montana State University to honor his exemplary public service.

For these and his other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters at Montana State University to Chief Judge Sidney R. Thomas and wishes him well for many years in the future.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Letter of Nomination from President Cruzado