

March 15-16, 2023

ITEM 205-2704-R0323

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emerita of English, Philosophy & Modern Languages upon Dr. Rachel Schaffer; Montana State University Billings

THAT

The Department of English, Philosophy, & Modern Languages is nominating Dr. Rachel Schaffer for emerita status upon her retirement based on the many contributions she has made to our students, department, College, and University over 40 years of service.

EXPLANATION

During 40 years of teaching and service at Eastern Montana College/Montana State University Billings, Dr. Rachel Schaffer taught a variety of linguistics, writing, and literature courses, first from 1984 to 1985 for Indian Career Services, where she focused on basic writing skills for Native American students, and then for the Department of English (Philosophy, and Modern Languages) from 1985 until her retirement in 2023. She served as Chair of the department from 2018 through 2022. She was the first recipient of the Cox Fellowship at EMC in 1988, and over the years, she also received two MSUB Outstanding Faculty Awards, three student-selected ASMSUB Outstanding Faculty Awards, an Outstanding Advisor Award, and a Chancellor's Star Award. For 35 years, she served as faculty advisor for MSU Billings' branch of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society, helping to organize the Writers Roundup book signing and sale to raise funds for scholarships for English majors and the annual campus poetry contest to give student poets a chance to have their talents recognized.

Dr. Schaffer received her BA in Linguistics and French from the University of Rochester, and her MA and Ph.D. in Linguistics from The Ohio State University. While her graduate research and dissertation focused on acoustic phonetics, after joining Eastern Montana College in 1983, her research interests shifted to mystery and detective fiction. She published more than 25 essays and reference articles on a variety of mystery writers and their work, along with delivering conference papers and editing a special issue of Clues: A Journal of Detection on Irish author Tana French. She has served since 2006 on the Clues editorial board, reviewing submissions and writing book reviews of critical works about mystery and detective fiction. As a lifetime member of the Popular Culture Association, she also contributed dozens of book reviews of newly published mystery novels to the Reading List newsletter of the Mystery and Detective Fiction Area and for several years led the Dove Award selection process to recognize outstanding scholarly contributions to the study of mystery and detective fiction.

In campus service, Dr. Schaffer coordinated the selection process for 13 English scholarships from 1989 to her retirement in 2023 and organized the Lyle Cooper Award selection process for the outstanding graduating senior in English. She also served four terms on the EMC/MSU Billings Foundation Board of Trustees, as well as on numerous university committees. In the community, she served on the Board of the YWCA; has been a member of the local Billings branch of AAUW since 1983, serving on the Board and Program Committee; and has also edited the Congregation Beth Aaron newsletter since 1988.

For these and other contributions, the Board of Regents of Higher Education is pleased to confer upon Dr. Rachel Schaffer the rank of Professor Emerita of English, Philosophy & Modern Languages, Montana State University Billings and wishes her well for many years into the future.

ATTACHMENTS

None