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FOUR UM LAW STUDENTS NAMED TO DEFENDER PROJECT

Four University of Montana Law School juniors are the selected participants in the Montana Defender Project this summer, according to William F. Crowley of the UM law faculty, who is state director of the project.

Those selected are Harry D. Endsley of Bigfork, Kenneth D. Peterson of Chester, J. Dwaine Roybal of Billings, and Marshall W. Dennis of Missoula, formerly of Lancaster, California. All will enter their senior year in the UM law school this fall.

The Montana Defender Project is designed to fulfill three needs. It will assist the defense of Indians appearing in federal district court by providing background investigation for their defense.

It will aid, secondly, the Montana Supreme Court in its investigation of handwritten writs of habeas corpus from indigent prisoners, and thirdly, it will be a valuable education tool for putting senior law students in closer contact with the actual practice of their profession.

Throughout the project, Crowley emphasized, the law seniors will be working closely with attorneys assigned to the cases, the courts and the UM law faculty. The Montana Defender Project is supported for its first three years by a $54,150 grant from the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and by the UM Law School on a matching basis.

(more)
The Association is funded by the Ford Foundation, and it supports varied programs with the intention of helping them to take root. William J. Jamison, judge of the Federal District Court for Montana in Billings, is a member of the Association’s National Advisory Board. Judge Jamison, a spearhead for the Montana project, has been instrumental in acquiring office space in the Billings and Glasgow federal buildings for the project participants, Endsley and Dennis, assigned to carry out the Indian concerns of the program in those areas respectively, Crowley reported.

Judge Jamison has also appointed advisory groups of attorneys to work with the participants in eastern Montana. Because Judge Jamison's court handles most of the Indian cases which appear before federal district court in Montana, he will assign the project participants to those cases he deems necessary.

The Montana Supreme Court often has insufficient evidence to consider a handwritten writ of habeas corpus from an indigent prisoner in the state prison.

Project participants, Peterson and Roybal, will be assigned by the Supreme Court to interview the prisoners for the facts in their cases. They will acquire the lower court records and list the possible errors for review.

Then they will present all their research in the proper legal form to the high court for its consideration, further research and possibly hearings and then the review of the tribunal.

The participants in this aspect of the program will be stationed in Missoula for the summer. When the academic year begins at the UM Law School, all four project participants will continue to research prisoners' writs until the summer of 1967, when the summer program again goes into effect. (more)
The four participants in the program were selected from among 19 applicants on the basis of their interest in the project, class standing and legal abilities. They will have a week's orientation at the Law School and in the Federal District Court and the Montana Supreme Court, before they commence their duties this summer.

Endsley holds a B.S. degree in general curriculum from Montana State University at Bozeman, Peterson a B.S. degree in economics from Brigham Young, Roybal an A.B. degree in psychology from Wheaton College and Dennis a B.A. degree in history and political science from the University of Montana.