William Bruce Cook selected as a Rhodes Scholar

University of Montana--Missoula. Office of University Relations

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FOR RELEASE SUNDAY A.M. (JANUARY 13)

William Bruce Cook, Butte, became Montana State University's 14th Rhodes Scholar when he was selected as one of four winners in the Northwest-District competition in Spokane last month. Scholarship winners will enter Oxford University, England, in the fall of 1957, to begin two years of study in a field of their choice.

Cook, a senior majoring in history and political science and in economics at the University in Missoula, plans to study philosophy, politics, and economics at Oxford. Although he has not definitely decided upon a career, he will probably enter law or teaching, he said.

Cook was one of 32 students in the United States who were successful in a three-stage selection process which began in October. Candidates for Rhodes Scholarships were chosen by their colleges. Then, Committees of Selection in each state designated two men to appear before a District Committee, which made the final selection. Cook was one of the four winners in the Northwestern District, comprised of Montana, Washington, and Oregon.

Selection of Rhodes Scholars is based upon four qualities: intellect, character, leadership, and physical vigor. Cecil Rhodes, founder of the scholarships, stipulated that winners must possess a balanced character and personality as well as literary and scholastic ability. He expressed the hope that the scholarships would send to Oxford students who would in their adult lives "esteem the performance of public duties as their highest aim."

Cook has demonstrated the requisite balance of qualities in his university career. He is a member of MSU's debate team, defending champions of the
Northwest Triangle Debate League and the Rocky Mountain Debate Assn. He is also business manager of ASMSU, student governing body, and a member of Phi Kappa Phi, senior scholastic honorary; Phi Alpha Theta, history and political science honorary; Tau Kappa Alpha, forensic honorary; and Silent Sentinel, a group of senior men chosen for service and leadership on the campus.

While at Oxford, Cook will live and study as a member of one of the 26 men's colleges, which, with five women's colleges, make up the university. He does not know yet to which college he will be assigned. Attendance at university lectures is optional, and most of the student's academic work is done under the supervision of a college tutor, who meets with him once a week. Working more or less independently, on an individual program, the student is expected to do research in the university libraries and to do much of his studying during vacation periods.

Cook hopes to be able to travel in the British Isles and on the Continent during the two yearly holidays of six weeks each and the long vacation of about four months. Such travel is encouraged, according to a Rhodes Scholarship Trust spokesman, to promote the kind of interchange among people in different countries that makes for better international understanding. As one recent Rhodes Scholar put it, "Oxford challenges the American to be an active and intelligent representative of his country."

"Oxford poses a rare opportunity because of the carefully preserved and unique tutor-student relationship and because of the splendid chance provided for the student to develop innate abilities through the many clubs which compete for his interest outside of his immediate studies," said Arch C. Callaway, former Oxford don who is now on the MSU faculty.

Another MSU graduate, Walter (Pat) Eyer, Billings, will complete his second year as a Rhodes Scholar in June 1957. Eyer, who received a B.A.
in political science, with high honors, from MSU in 1955, is studying jurisprudence at Oxford.

Stanley E. Soderlind, Billings, went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar in the fall of 1950, after being graduated from MSU the preceding June with a degree in journalism. Soderlind is now manager of The Wall Street Journal’s southeastern bureau, Jacksonville, Fla. Another MSU journalism student, Ralph Kirby Davidson, was named a Rhodes Scholar when he was a sophomore. He entered Oxford in 1948. He is now assistant professor of economics at Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind.

MSU’s tenth Rhodes Scholar was Robert E. Bates, who attended Oxford from 1937-1939, earning B.A. and M.A. degrees in law. From 1947-50, he was assistant professor of history and political science and part-time placement officer at MSU. At present, he is with the Rockefeller Brothers’ Fund, New York, N. Y.

After receiving a B.A. in chemistry from MSU, C. Eugene Sunderlin went to Oxford in 1934, where he continued his study of science. Dr. Sunderlin has been a chemistry professor at the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., the director of the Office of Naval Research in London, England, and is now deputy director of the National Science Foundation in Washington, D. C.

Joseph H. Fitzgerald, who was MSU’s eighth winner, went to Oxford in 1932. For a time he practiced law in Maine, and subsequently, he became director of the Bureau of Air Operations, Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, D. C.

From 1920-30, five scholars were selected from MSU. D. C. Skeels went to England in 1930. Dr. Skeels is a geophysicist with the Union Oil Co. in Calgary, Alta. Radcliffe H. Beckwith, a 1921-Rhodes Scholar, became a geologist. He taught at the University of Wyoming for many years before he joined the Union Oil Co. of California. He is stationed at Houston, Tex. J. A. Farmer, who
entered Oxford in 1921 with Beckwith, is now General Attorney for the American Telephone and Telegraph Co., New York, N. Y. Burt A. Teats, who won the scholarship in 1923, was a professor of English in New York, according to the latest available information.

The other MSU Rhodes Scholar during this decade is probably the one most widely known by the general public. Clarence Streit was graduated from the University with a degree in journalism in 1919, and went to Oxford in 1920. His work in the Union Now movement, as president of Federal Union Inc. and editor of Freedom and Union, won him international recognition and a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1939, MSU conferred upon him an honorary LL.B. degree.

When Streit received the scholarship in 1920, the University had not had a representative at Oxford since 1907, the year J. R. Thomas went to England. Thomas entered the accounting field and became secretary-treasurer of the Montana Power Co., with headquarters in Butte. He is now retired.

George E. Barnes, a 1902-alumnus of MSU, went to Oxford in the first group of American Rhodes Scholars in 1904. He took first honors at Christ Church College. At the time of his death in 1943, Dr. Barnes had been a minister in Philadelphia, Pa. for many years and a leader in the Presbyterian Church in America.

Also in the first group of Rhodes Scholars from America was Dr. Harold G. Merriam, MSU professor emeritus, who for many years was chairman of the English Department. Dr. Nathan B. Blumberg, dean of the MSU School of Journalism, was also a Rhodes Scholar.