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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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Feb. 4, 1992

HISTORIAN TAKES NEW LOOK AT OLD WEST IN TWO PRESENTATIONS AT UM MISSOULA --

Patricia Nelson Limerick, a leading proponent of what has been called "the new Western history," will visit The University of Montana Thursday, Feb. 13, for an evening lecture and an afternoon discussion.

Limerick, a history professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, will address "The Re-envisioning of the American West" as part of the President's Lecture Series at 8 p.m. in the Montana Theatre. At 3 p.m., she will discuss Western ghost towns in "Haunted Landscapes Approached Through Words and Pictures," part of UM's Series on the Rocky Mountain West, in Main Hall 210.

"She has become kind of a spokesperson for the new approach to Western history," UM history department Chair Bill Farr said, citing recent articles about her work in The New York Times Magazine, The New Republic and The Washington Post. "She's at the forefront of that corps of academic young Turks who have mounted an attack against the frontier thesis and the old view of the West as racist, nationalistic, triumphal and sexist."

The new view addresses the failures and tragedies that accompanied the conquest of the West and looks beyond the white male heroes of Western lore to examine the lives and experiences of women, Native Americans, Hispanics and other less-chronicled groups.

Limerick has written two books, "Desert Passages: Encounters with the American Deserts,"

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published in 1985, and "The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West," 1987. Her essays appear in the books "Beyond the Mythic West," "A Society to Match the Scenery" and "Trails: Toward a New Western History," which she also edited. She currently has two books under contract -- "Troubled Land: Failure and Defeat in Western Expansion" and "The Atomic West" -- and contributed an essay to the upcoming "Oxford History of the American West."

She writes frequent columns for USA Today and is widely quoted as a leader in revisionist Western history.

Limerick taught at Yale and Harvard universities before joining the University of Colorado faculty in 1984. She earned a bachelor's degree in American Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and master's and doctoral degrees in American Studies from Yale University.

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