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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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Feb. 10, 1995

AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORIAN TO SPEAK AT UM ON CHARTER DAY

MISSOULA --

Integrating the American Indian experience into American history is the topic of a free public lecture at the University of Montana - Missoula Thursday, Feb. 16.

Donald Fixico, a Seminole Indian and history professor at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, will present "Learning from Indian People: The Forging of a Cooperative Reality," at 7:30 p.m. in UM's Music Recital Hall. The lecture is sponsored by the Center for the Rocky Mountain West in conjunction with UM's Charter Day celebration.

Fixico specializes in American Indian history, oral history and ethnohistory. He has published one book on urban Indians and is working on another. He has lectured extensively about learning from American Indian heritage.

"Clearly, he's a 20th century historian," said Bill Farr, chair of UM's history department and director of the Center for the Rocky Mountain West. "I'm expecting that he will address how the Native American experience can be taught in an academic setting using oral and traditional methods with the academic methodologies employed by white historians."

Farr noted that Native Americans are trying to blend a tribal understanding of themselves with the practice of academic history and Fixico is helping to bridge the gap. "Indian history has a modern, contemporary dimension that is central to our regional culture, and that's why we're having him. This history is part of all our history."

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Montana is home to seven reservations and a large Indian population, Farr said.

Fixico is the first in what is to be an annual American Indian lecture series, sponsored by the center. Since its founding three years ago at UM, the study center has brought in Western writers, filmmakers and others artists in an effort to examine regional identity.

"We're a regional study center using a variety of approaches to see if we can't discover more about ourselves, who we are and where we're going," Farr said.

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Contact: Bill Farr, 243-2978.

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Local, specialized Western print, tribal papers

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