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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

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April 4, 1996

FRIENDS OF MANSFIELD LIBRARY SCHEDULE SPRING BANQUET

MISSOULA --

The Friends of The University of Montana's Mansfield Library will host a spring banquet featuring award presentations and operatic entertainment Tuesday, April 16, at the Village Red Lion Inn.

A no-host reception will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 7 p.m. and music by UM's Opera Workshop.

The occasion also includes presentation of the 1996 H.G. Merriam Awards to Montana authors Annick Smith and Mildred Walker.

Smith is the author of a recent book, "Homestead," a memoir of her life, family and heritage. She's also producer of the internationally acclaimed film "Heartland" and co-editor of "The Last Best Place: A Montana Anthology." Born in Paris and raised in Chicago, Smith has homesteaded in the Blackfoot Valley since 1964. She's currently writing a book on Oklahoma's tallgrass prairie for the Nature Conservancy.

Walker, a native of Philadelphia, moved to Montana with her husband in 1933 and wrote nine of her 14 novels while living in Great Falls and Beavercreek. Of those nine, "Winter Wheat" was a Literary Guild selection in 1944, "The Body of a Young Man" was nominated for a National Book Award, and "The Southwest Corner" became a Broadway play and television movie. After her husband's death she returned to her alma mater, Wells College, and taught there for 13 years. The mother of Ripley Schemm Hugo, Walker now lives in Portland, Ore.

The banquet costs \$15. To make reservations, call 243-6800 before April 12.

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