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# The University of Montana

## NEWS RELEASE

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May 10, 1996

### FOUR RECEIVE HONORARY DEGREES AT UM COMMENCEMENT MAY 17-18

#### MISSOULA--

A Crow tribal historian, a Montana geologist, a former law school dean and an inner-city attorney will receive honorary doctorate degrees during commencement ceremonies at The University of Montana—Missoula Friday and Saturday, May 17-18.

UM President George Dennison will present honorary Doctor of Laws degrees to Robert E. Sullivan of Missoula, retired UM law school dean, and Margaret Holmes McDowell of New York City, an attorney for the Legal Aid Society of New York, at the law school's 7 p.m. hooding ceremony Friday in the University Theatre.

At Saturday's 99th commencement ceremony at 9:30 a.m. in the Harry Adams Field House, Dennison will present Joe Medicine Crow of Lodge Grass, an anthropologist and member of the Crow Tribe, with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, and Edward T. Ruppel of Butte, a retired geologist, with an honorary Doctor of Science degree.

As dean of the UM School of Law from 1955 to 1979, Sullivan was a leader in the movement for continuing legal education for lawyers and in changing Montana legal codes from territorial enactments to modern law. Under Sullivan's guidance, the law school extended its outreach activities through the Montana Defender Project, the Montana Criminal Information Center and other clinical programs.

Sullivan practiced law in Ohio and taught at Notre Dame's law school, his alma mater,

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before joining the UM law faculty in 1954. He taught consumer credit, professional responsibility, corporations and property law over the years.

A mineral law expert, Sullivan wrote the "Handbook of Oil and Gas Law." After his retirement from UM in 1979, Sullivan served as vice president and general counsel for the Montana Power Co. until 1983.

McDowell, the lone woman graduate in UM's 1938 law school class, juggled raising four children with providing legal representation to people who needed it most, from immigrants to asylum seekers and children to senior citizens.

From 1938 to 1943 McDowell worked for the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C. During World War II she worked for the National War Labor Board in Denver as assistant regional attorney.

McDowell joined the Legal Aid Society of New York in 1967 as a volunteer practicing family law. In 1974, she helped establish the legal aid society's office for the aging in Brooklyn. McDowell, who is a senior attorney with the society's immigration law unit, received a UM Distinguished Alumni Award in 1994.

Medicine Crow has dedicated his life to teaching students, scholars and the public about Crow history and culture. He earned a master's degree in anthropology in 1939 from the University of Southern California, becoming the first of his tribe to attain such a high educational degree. His master's thesis, "The Effects of European Culture Contacts Upon the Economic, Social and Religious Life of the Crow Indians," is widely used today by those interested in Crow culture and the ethnohistory of the Northern Plains Indians.



His coursework for a doctorate degree was interrupted by World War II, when he chose, like many Crow warriors before him, to defend his country. Medicine Crow put his anthropological expertise to work for his people when he was named tribal historian and anthropologist in 1948. That year, he also began a career that spanned four decades with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in Billings and Crow Agency.

Medicine Crow has written and lectured extensively on historical and contemporary Crow life. He wrote his first full-length book, "From the Heart of Crow Country," in 1992. At age 82, Medicine Crow is working on a new book.

Ruppel earned his bachelor's degree in geology from UM in 1948, his master's degree from the University of Wyoming in 1950, and his doctorate from Yale University in 1958. He devoted much of his career to the U.S. Geological Survey, where he worked in geologic and mineral resource research and in scientific administration.

He served as director and chief geologist for the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology at Montana Tech in Butte from 1986 until his retirement in 1994.

Ruppel, an expert in Montana geology, has concentrated his geological research efforts in southwestern Montana, the Idaho Rocky Mountain region and Wyoming. He is credited with producing U.S. Geological Survey maps and reports that are widely used today by industry geologists, students and university faculty.

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