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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "For 2 scholars, Rhodes lead back to UM" (1997). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 14560.
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NEWS RELEASE

This release is available electronically on INN (News Net).

Jan. 10, 1997

FOR 2 SCHOLARS, RHODES LEAD BACK TO UM

MISSOULA --

Twenty-eight Rhodes Scholars have emerged from the University of Montana's Missoula campus; this year, two of those scholars will be back in UM classrooms -- as visiting faculty.

Bridget Clarke and Molly Kramer, who followed the Rhodes to England's Oxford University in 1990 and 1992, have each been assigned to teach a course for UM's philosophy department. Kramer is already on board, teaching Historical Perspectives on Animals in America and Great Britain during UM's winter-break intersession. Clarke will teach Introduction to Logic: Deduction during spring semester.

Both women are working on doctorates -- Kramer in history at Oxford, Clarke in philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh -- and plan to work on their dissertations in Missoula, a place they love. And both say they are delighted to be able to give something back to the university that helped launch their academic careers.

"It's really nice to be able to go back and teach with the people I learned from, the people who got me interested in philosophy," said Clarke, who will return to Missoula in late January.

"There's something really sweet about that."

Faculty members share that sentiment.

"We're delighted to have them back," philosophy Professor Albert Borgmann said. "Both of them are just outstanding students who proved their mettle in the rather demanding environment of Oxford."

"And I think it's a real credit to this university that, after that heady atmosphere, they chose to come back here as a place to do their thinking and writing," Borgmann said.

Kramer, an environmental studies major at UM, called the Rhodes Scholarship "a treasure, a real gift." Her time at Oxford overlapped with three other UM Rhodes Scholars: Clarke, 1993 scholar Scott Bear Don't Walk and UM's most recent scholar, Charlotte Morrison, who went to Oxford in 1994.

With its formality, entrenched traditions and institutional grandeur, Oxford presents a striking contrast to the relatively casual and supportive atmosphere at UM, Kramer said, noting that the relationship between faculty and students is much more nurturing and interactive at UM.

Clarke, who earned a master's in social anthropology at Oxford before heading to Pittsburgh for doctoral studies, said she looks forward to feeling the UM dynamic from the other side of the teacher-student balance.

"The University of Montana is an exceptionally activist university," she said. "I knew it that way as a student, and I'm interested in knowing what it's like as a teacher."

UM Rhodes Adviser Deborah Slicer, who had both Kramer and Clarke as philosophy teaching assistants, said current UM students should benefit greatly from the opportunity to learn from the two women.

"They're good role models, people who went through this particular institution, went out into the world and came back as successful scholars and teachers," she said.

Both scholars hail from the Midwest -- Clarke from Michigan, Kramer from Illinois -- but each developed a strong attachment to Missoula while attending UM.

"It's nice to be back where there's wilderness," Kramer said. "The first year I was away I thought about the mountains here every night before I went to sleep."

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