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### Former Gov. Racicot to speak at UM commencement, receive honorary doctor of laws degree May 19

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May 8, 2001

**Contact:** President George Dennison, (406) 243-2311; School of Law Dean E. Edwin Eck, (406) 243-4311.

**FORMER GOV. RACICOT TO SPEAK AT UM COMMENCEMENT,  
RECEIVE HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS DEGREE MAY 19**

**MISSOULA -**

Former Montana Gov. Marc Racicot, chair of America's Promise and a close adviser of President George W. Bush, will receive an honorary doctorate from The University of Montana during the 104th Commencement ceremony this month.

The UM School of Law alumnus will have to work a bit for his award when he takes the stage to accept an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) on Saturday, May 19. Racicot has agreed to send some 2,000 graduates into the world with words of wisdom, inspiration and advice as this year's Commencement speaker.

Racicot has been in the national spotlight since last fall's presidential election because of his close friendship and professional relationship with President Bush. He served on Bush's legal team during the Florida election challenges and earlier this year was considered for appointment as U.S. attorney general, which he declined, citing family obligations. Racicot most recently was considered for appointment as FBI director, which he said he would not

-more-

accept for the same reason.

The Montana native later became a partner in the Washington, D.C., office of the Texas-based law firm of Bracewell and Patterson and was appointed chair of America's Promise: The Alliance For Youth, which was founded and previously chaired by Colin Powell. America's Promise aims to mobilize people from all sectors to build character and competence among the nation's youth by providing interaction with caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, marketable skills and opportunities to serve.

UM President George Dennison said it is an honor to the University that Racicot has accepted the honorary degree and an invitation to speak to graduates.

"Over the years, I have found Gov. Racicot to be a good and true friend, a solid supporter of higher education, a wise and committed counselor, and a role model for young people," Dennison said. "He is a great man whose attributes have not yet been fully appreciated."

Dennison also noted Racicot's commitment to community service and civic engagement, first as Montana's governor and now as leader of America's Promise. Dennison, who has advocated service learning and civic involvement during his tenure as UM's president, was appointed by Racicot to chair the Montana Commission on Community Service.

Racicot was nominated for the honorary degree by UM's School of Law faculty. A nominating letter by law Dean E. Edwin Eck said Racicot's renown reflects favorably on UM and the entire Montana University System. "This Montana native has devoted his entire career to public service, and the bulk of that public service has occurred within the state of Montana,"

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Eck wrote.

The two-term Montana governor earned a bachelor's degree in English from Carroll College in 1970 and enrolled the following fall in UM's law school. He graduated with his juris doctorate from UM in 1973. As an Army ROTC graduate, Racicot was immediately assigned to the Judge Advocate General's Corps and stationed in West Germany, where he served as chief prosecutor for the largest U.S. military jurisdiction in Europe. Leaving the Army with a captain's rank, he returned to Montana and became Missoula County deputy attorney.

In 1977 Racicot went to work as a state assistant attorney general and served as Montana's first special prosecutor, handling major cases statewide. In that role he prosecuted Don and Dan Nichols, the notorious "Mountain Men" convicted of abducting international athlete Kari Swenson and murdering her would-be rescuer.

In 1988, Racicot was elected state attorney general and won the Montana gubernatorial race in 1992. He was re-elected governor in 1996. During his tenure, Montanans kept Racicot ranked as the nation's most popular governor.

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