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### Annual Friends of The Library Banquet set for April 10

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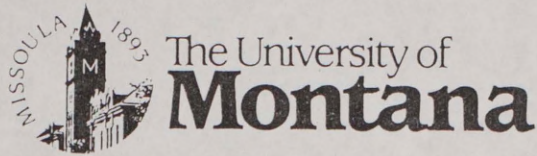
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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March 26, 2002

**Contact:** Jerri Balsam, assistant to the dean, Mansfield Library, (406) 243-6800.

### **ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BANQUET SET FOR APRIL 10**

#### **MISSOULA—**

Two distinguished authors -- one living and one deceased -- will be honored for their contributions to Montana literature during the Friends of the Mansfield Library 39th Annual Spring Banquet at 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 10, at the Holiday Inn Parkside.

Authors Rick Bass and Joseph Kinsey Howard will each receive the H.G. Merriam Award for Distinguished Contributions to Montana Literature. Bass, a resident of the Yaak Valley in northwest Montana, is author of many books, including "The Watch" and "Where the Sea Used to Be." Howard wrote the critically acclaimed "Montana: High, Wide and Handsome" before dying in 1951 at age 45.

Banquet tickets cost \$20 before April 6 and are \$25 thereafter and at the door. Tables for 10 are available for \$200 when purchased in advance. To buy tickets, call The University of Montana Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library at (406) 243-6800.

Bass has published nearly 20 fiction and nonfiction books, as well as a host of articles. His first short-story collection, "The Watch," won the 1988 PEN/Nelson Algren Award in 1988. Bass also received the 1995 James Jones Fellowship Award for his novel "Where the Sea Used to Be." His fiction works often are set in Texas, while his nonfiction tackles issues of the West. He is active with community forestry issues in northwest Montana, and these

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interests are reflected in his books.

Howard's book "Montana: High, Wide and Handsome" is the story of the state of Montana. It is consistently noted by critics as one of the top books about the state.

The Friends of the Mansfield Library has presented more than 20 H.G. Merriam Awards over the years to some of the most talented writers associated with Montana, including Norman Maclean, Ivan Doig and Deirdre McNamer. Libby Brown, chair of the Friends of the Library Award Committee, said presenting the award posthumously to Howard was intended "to correct an oversight" for a book that is a "favorite of many Montanans."

Howard also is author of such notable works as "Strange Empire: Lois Riel and the Mâetis People" and "Strange Empire: A Narrative of the Northwest."

Friends of the Mansfield Library is a nonprofit organization whose members share enthusiasm for books, manuscripts, archives and other library resources; promote awareness of the Mansfield Library's collections and services; solicit and encourage gifts, endowments and bequests for the library; and fund exhibits, programs, collections and other high-priority library needs.

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