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### Elementary educator wins top teaching award

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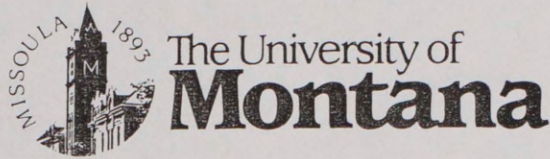
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Feb. 2, 2006

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### **ELEMENTARY EDUCATOR WINS TOP TEACHING AWARD**

#### **MISSOULA –**

Dan Rude was honored as the Montana Teacher of the Year in 1975.

Now 31 years later and near the end of his 40-year career, the fourth-grade Rattlesnake Elementary School teacher is the 2006 recipient of the prestigious Maryfrances Shreeve Award, presented by UM's School of Education. The award, which honors the memory of longtime Montana teacher Maryfrances Shreeve, is given to a teacher each year who embodies the spirit, character and quality of teaching for which she was known.

Along with the recognition, Rude will receive \$1,000 to give to the school in his name for a cause he deems worthy and \$2,000 for himself. Rude also will be recognized at UM's School of Education reception Friday, Feb. 10, in the University Center Ballroom.

"I know that there are many hard-working, dedicated and community-minded teachers worthy of this honor," Rude said. "I feel truly blessed to be the recipient of the Maryfrances Shreeve Award at the end of my 40-year teaching career."

At last year's education reception, Denis Thane, a colleague of Rude's who has worked with him for 26 years, was watching previous winner Barbara O'Keefe receive the award. Thane remembers thinking if anyone deserved this award it was Rude, so when the time came to submit nominations for this year's award, Thane entered Rude.

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"His dedication is demonstrated by the fact that he is usually the first teacher to arrive in the morning, as well as the last one to leave at night," Thane wrote in his nomination letter for Rude.

"It's kind of humbling knowing where it came from -- that your peers nominated you," Rude said. "It makes you feel very humbled and proud to be a part of their staff."

According to his nominators, Rude personifies the qualities this prestigious award outlines -- community involvement, commitment to enthusiasm in education and a reputation of going the extra mile. Rude is deeply involved in his community as a member or leader in Sons of Norway, St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Habitat for Humanity. He is the international youth director of Sons of Norway and on the Family Selection Committee for Habitat for Humanity. He brings his sense of community to the classroom through instilling the importance of a student's heritage, and one year his class even bought a door and a window for a Habitat house.

"You influence youngsters by who you are and what you are," Rude said. "I try to impart to these kids that their heritage is important to them. Before you know where you're going, you need to know where you come from."

Rude goes the extra mile and shows enthusiasm in his classroom by creating a scrapbook of his class each year, working with students on a stamp collecting project and even by having a day where students dress up in a competition to look like him. Many of the parents, colleagues and even a student commented on his idea of Bartholomew the Bear, a stuffed animal that has been to Washington, D.C. and even met the governor, along with Rude's students. Over the weekend Bartholomew is sent home with them so they can write stories about the adventures



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they experience together.

“Mr. Rude is a great teacher because he always puts some fun into his work,” said Breandan Herron, who was in Rude’s class last year. “When I say that, I mean that he often brings his pet dog, Tika, to parties and always does some great art and writing projects when holidays come.”

There is indeed a mutual fondness between students and their teacher. “The kids make it,” Rude said. “That’s why you get up and come to work each day.”

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