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Film, lecture focus on importance of indigenous language

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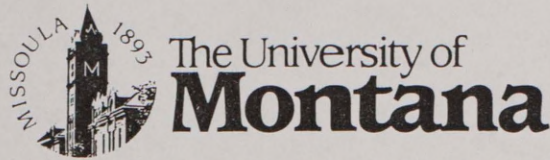
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NEWS RELEASE

March 20, 2006

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FILM, LECTURE FOCUS ON IMPORTANCE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

MISSOULA—

What's lost if a language disappears? What efforts can stop a decline in use? Those are the questions posed by a new documentary film, "Why Save A Language?" which will be screened 7 p.m., Thursday, March 23 in the North Underground Lecture Hall at The University of Montana.

The preview showing will be followed by a lecture, "Ecological Knowledge in the Blackfoot Language," presented by Narcisse Blood, a Kainai educator and Native speaker from the University of Lethbridge School of Education.

The film was created by Sally Thompson, director of the Lifelong Learning Project in UM's School of Continuing Education, and Darrell Kipp, director of the Piegan Institute on the Blackfeet Reservation. The 20-minute documentary is the final product of more than 100 interviews Thompson conducted with members of 27 tribes.

Thompson hopes the film will jumpstart public discussion about Native languages – their history, academic achievement through their use and their reserves of regional knowledge – and public support for programs to help sustain them.

The screening is a preliminary step, Thompson said. She is working to expand the film into an hour-long feature and create an accompanying facilitator's guide to be distributed around

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the state.

Funding for the film was provided by a media grant from the Montana Committee for the Humanities.

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