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Former man of diplomacy now enjoys botany work

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FORMER MAN OF DIPLOMACY
NOW ENJOYS BOTANY WORK

MISSOULA--

People don't always pursue later in life the fields they initially select when they start to college.

For proof of that premise visit with Melvin L. Thornton, 40, Billings, who receives a Doctor of Philosophy degree in botany June 15 at the University of Montana, Missoula. Thornton is among 10 graduate students scheduled to receive doctorates during the commencement ceremonies at 2 p.m. June 15 in the Harry Adams Field House.

Thornton was awarded a bachelor's degree in international affairs at the University of Denver, Denver, Colo., in 1952. He received a master's degree in international law and diplomacy at Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Medford, Mass., in 1958.

A graduate teaching assistant in botany on the Missoula campus since 1968, Thornton's work at UM has largely been involved with mycology, the study of mushrooms and other fungi, and his doctoral dissertation concerns a microscopic fungus. He has been studying botany at UM five years.

Following his formal studies at Denver, Thornton served three years as a Navy intelligence officer.

As for diplomacy work in general, he didn't like it.

"I decided to get out of the diplomacy profession," Thornton explained. "I guess because of my agricultural background I was more attracted to botany. And I enjoy research and teaching on the college level."

He is son of Mr. and Mrs. Royal J. Thornton, 539 Yellowstone Ave., Billings, who have lived on a ranch most of their lives.

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The younger Thornton has found a great deal of satisfaction in botany and his love for a science has resulted in a sizeable financial grant from the National Science Foundation.

Thornton received word recently that the NSF has awarded him a post-doctoral grant to study during the 1969-70 academic year at Birkbeck College at the University of London in England. He will receive \$6,500 plus an additional allowance for his wife, June, and the couple's two children.

His wife is the former June Timms of Morton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire, England, which is 100 miles west of London. The couple met while at the University of Denver and they married shortly after graduation in 1952. Mrs. Thornton also received her bachelor's degree in international affairs at Denver.

Thornton will take many college memories with him to England, besides thoughts of his earlier days at Billings Senior High School, where he was graduated in 1946.

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