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Dr. Firman H. Brown wins national award

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DR. FIRMAN H. BROWN
WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Dr. Firman H. (Bo) Brown Jr., chairman of the University of Montana Drama Department and director of the Montana Repertory Theater, has received one of the first two awards for achievement given by Arts Management, a national publication for those who work in the arts.

Dean Charles W. Bolen of the UM School of Fine Arts announced that Dr. Brown won the Career Service Award for his contributions to cultural development over the past decade.

Harvey Lichtenstein, director of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, N. Y., received the Administrator of the Year Award.

The judges were Donald L. Engle, R. Philip Hanes Jr. and Charles C. Mark.

Dr. Brown's award recognizes his work in spurring theater and arts development throughout a sparsely settled area.

He joined the UM faculty in 1956 and became drama chairman in 1958, when the department's faculty numbered two and the only degree offered was the B. A. Arts Management notes that Dr. Brown "... has built the department into one of the Northwest's finest, with a dozen productions a year, 65 drama majors, a faculty of seven, and both undergraduate and graduate programs offering B. A., B. F. A., M. A. and M. F. A. degrees in drama."

(more)

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In 1967 he organized the Montana Repertory Theater, a semi-professional group funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Montana Arts Council and the University. The company plays a season of repertory in Missoula and then tours communities in neighboring states.

He also founded and for several years managed the Bigfork Summer Playhouse, brought theater productions to the Montana fair circuit, and helped others form summer theater companies. He has lectured, guest directed, and adjudicated festivals throughout the Northwest and has been adviser to the Montana High School Drama League. He twice took University groups on USO tours of U. S. overseas military bases.

Dr. Brown has been a member of the Montana Arts Council since its inception. He belongs to the National Theatre Conference, whose membership is limited to 100, and to other professional societies. He holds B. A. and M. A. degrees in journalism from the UM and a Ph. D. in speech and drama from the University of Wisconsin.

Upon being notified of his selection, Brown told Arts Management, "Working in the theater - or any of the arts for that matter - has quite simply never been work to me. Rather it is a way of life, and there couldn't be a better one. In this unbelievably complicated world it has been humbly rewarding to know that by selling, promoting, building and managing an arts program you have permanently enriched thousands of people's lives."

Dean Bolen commented, "I am most gratified to learn that Dr. Brown has received this significant, and well deserved, national honor."