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BLIND STUDENT ENROLLS AT UM SUMMER SESSION

By Barbara Ehrlich
UM Information services

MISSOULA-----

Jack Edmonds, a 45-year-old Summer Session student at the University of Montana, Missoula, faces a quarter more challenging than that of almost any other UM student.

Edmonds has been blind since an accident at age 15 when he was hit in the head with a baseball bat.

A faculty member at Victor High School where he teaches American and world history courses to freshmen and sophomores, Edmonds is attending UM this summer to earn the 12 units required to maintain his regular teaching credentials in Montana.

Although Edmonds finds UM demanding, he says his daily life is considerably simpler than at any other university which he has attended since the UM campus is smaller and he finds it easier to get around. Edmonds describes the atmosphere of a smaller university as more personal. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California at Berkeley in 1952 and received his teaching credentials from San Francisco State in 1961.

To help him move around campus, Edmonds has a seven-year-old seeing-eye dog, Ricky. "Finding classes is a combination of trying to keep up with where I'm going and getting Ricky used to my schedule. Sometimes he follows students off the sidewalk on to the grass and I lose my orientation," he says.

(more)

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Ricky also has a will of his own. "During registration," Edmonds relates, "Ricky tried to get to the head of the lines because he believes all lines start after him."

Edmonds takes his examinations orally and, instead of writing notes, he takes a tape recorder to his classes in the morning to record lectures. "Usually if I listen to a tape a couple of times, I have it about memorized," he says.

He spends the afternoons listening to tapes or the radio or else meeting with his readers, two students, Kevin Dwyer and Josephine Stefin, who read assignments to him.

For recreation Edmonds likes to swim, horseback ride, fish or golf.

During the Summer Session, Edmonds is residing in Aber Hall, a UM dormitory. His wife Carol, a surgical technician at the Daly Memorial Hospital in Hamilton, and their children, Carol Jean, 15, and Tommy, 4, are residing in their home in Hamilton. The Edmonds came to Montana last year because they "couldn't stand conditions in the big city," Edmonds says.

Edmonds was formerly employed at Armstrong College School of Business at Berkeley, Calif., in counseling, placement and public relations.

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