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H. G. Merriam and Franklin A. Long to be awarded honorary doctorates

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

Montana State University will confer an honorary doctor of letters on Dr. H. G. Merriam, professor emeritus of English, and an honorary doctor of science on alumnus Dr. Franklin A. Long, professor of chemistry at Cornell University, at commencement exercises June 10, President H. K. Newburn announced.

A faculty recommendation, concurred in by Dr. Newburn, cites Dr. Merriam for "outstanding achievements in encouraging creative writing in the Northwest and in contributing to the development of culture in Montana" and Dr. Long for "outstanding contributions in the field of physical chemistry."

Dr. Merriam retired in 1954 after 35 years as chairman of the English Department. He came to the University in 1919 and the next year founded a campus literary magazine, Frontier, which later merged with Midland. Before financial stress in 1939, spelled an end to publication, Frontier and Midland had launched a number of writing careers and had won national esteem. This year, the University Press published "Frontier Omnibus," with an introduction by Dr. Merriam.

Prof. Merriam's work with the magazine led to emphasis on writing in the English Department, and within a few years, the University became the first school in the Northwest to grant degrees for creative work. This period also saw the beginning of writers' conferences on campus, which Dr. Merriam directed personally until 1949, when he delegated the assignment to the late Joseph Kinsey Howard.

As a former Rhodes scholar, the new department head stimulated interest in the program, and in his first year on campus the University had its first Rhodes scholar in a decade. Since Clarence Streit won a Rhodes in 1919, many University students have been awarded the scholarships for study at Oxford by regional selection committees, on which Prof. Merriam has often served.

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The teacher, editor and writer was co-founder and first president of Montana Institute of the Arts in 1948. He has published in national magazines, has edited anthologies of Northwest literature, and is currently editor of the M.I.A. quarterly.

Prof. Merriam earned a B.A. at the University of Wyoming in 1905 and, as one of the country’s first Rhodes scholars, a B.A. at Lincoln College, Oxford University, in 1907. He holds an M.A. from Oxford, a Ph.D. from Columbia University and an honorary doctorate from Wyoming, awarded last year. He is an honorary member of the Wyoming chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. Before coming to the University, he taught for two years each at Whitman College and Beloit College and for six years at Reed College.

Dr. Long earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in chemistry at MSU in 1931 and 1932 and a Ph.D. in physical chemistry at the University of California in 1935. After teaching at the University of California in 1935-36 and the University of Chicago in 1936-37, he began his service at Cornell, where he headed the Chemistry Department from 1950 to 1960.

The Great Falls native is a member of the President’s Science Advisory Committee and of the National Research Council Committee on Chemistry and Chemical Technology. He is chairman of the Chemistry Advisory Committee to the Air Force Office of Scientific Research and Cornell’s representative on the board of trustees of Associated Universities, Inc., which administers Brookhaven National Laboratory.

The chemist has been consultant to the U.S. Naval Department, chairman of the American Chemical Society Division of Physical Chemistry, and a member of advisory boards to the Air Force and the Department of Defense. He received the Naval Ordnance Development Award in 1954. His numerous other honors include election to the American Academy of Sciences in 1962.

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Dr. Long is the author of articles in scientific journals and a member of a number of learned societies, both in the United States and abroad.

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