Montana State University Homecoming Distinguished Service Alumni Award

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A colorful spectrum of achievement is covered by the careers of the men and women chosen this year to receive the Distinguished Service Alumni Award, highest honor the Montana State University Alumni Association can bestow. George P. Sarsfield, Butte, association president, announced that the award will be conferred at the Homecoming singing-on-the-steps at Main Hall at 7:15 p.m. Friday.

Recipients are Jeannette Rankin, class of 1902, humanitarian and ex-Congresswoman now living in Georgia; Wellington D. Rankin,'03, Helena attorney; Lucille Jameson Armsby, '22, MSU faculty member; Bryan P. Leverich, ex-'29, Salt Lake City railroad executive, and U.S. Dist. Judge William D. Murray, '36, Butte. Terry G. Dillon, '64, Grizzly gridiron great who lost his life in an accident last spring, will receive the award posthumously.

Miss Rankin, who was reared on a ranch near Missoula, was the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress. As Montana representative-at-large in the 65th Congress she voted against this country's entry into World War I. Elected to a second term in 1941 as a Republican from Montana's First District, she cast the only Congressional vote against entry into World War II. She did not seek re-election in 1942.

Called by President Kennedy "one of the truly courageous women in American history," Miss Rankin was in the forefront of the fight for women's suffrage. She was influential in getting a favorable vote in the Montana legislature in 1919 on the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the ballot. For the next 20 years she worked in many states for legislation to improve conditions for women and children. She was also active in peace movements, and she worked closely with Jane Addams at Hull House.

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The sprightly octogenarian continues to work for the humanitarian causes that have taken her to many countries over the years. During a six-month stay in India in 1946 she interviewed Nehru, whom she talked to again on subsequent visits. She went back to India in 1949 to study Gandhi's teachings on nonviolence and returned to India in 1961 and 1963.

Wellington Rankin, the other half of the first brother-sister combination to win the DSA, has played a prominent part in state and national Republican affairs, having served as national committeeman, chairman of the 11-state GOP Western Conference, chairman of the state central committee's executive body and state finance chairman. He was his party's candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1942 and 1948.

After graduation from the University Rankin earned a law degree at Harvard. In his early years as an attorney he was associated in practice with the late Sen. Thomas J. Walsh. Subsequently he served as Montana attorney general, U.S. attorney, and state supreme court justice.

The Helena lawyer is also a farmer and stockman, and he has extensive ranch holdings in the state. He is a World War I veteran.

Mrs. Armsby, who holds the rank of assistant professor, began her service to the University as assistant registrar and, since 1933, has been secretary to the president of the University. Her loyalty and efficiency in the latter post have been commended by all the MSU administrations she has served.

As faculty adviser to Mortar Board, senior women's honorary, and pledge adviser to her sorority, Alpha Phi, Mrs. Armsby has been a helpful friend to countless students. Her interest in students has extended to the very young, as evidenced (more)
by her many years as teacher and superintendent of the three to six-year-old department of the First Methodist Church Sunday School.

Mrs. Armsby was honored at the 1958 Theta Sigma Phi Matrix Table "for devoted service to the young people of the community." The women's professional journalism fraternity also cited her "for the understanding, kindness and tact that she has brought to her professional life as secretary to MSU presidents."

Leverich, general solicitor for the Union Pacific Railroad Co., was born in Larimore, N.D. After earning a bachelor's degree at MSU, he took a law degree at the University of Utah and was admitted to the bar in Utah.

Leverich practiced law in Salt Lake City from 1932 to 1937, when he became a city court judge. From 1940 to 1944 he was a district court judge. He joined the Union Pacific Co. in 1944 as assistant general attorney and in 1948 was elevated to his present position.

He is chairman of the Utah Railroad Association and past president of the Utah Bar Association. He is a member of the Transportation Association of America, the Salt Lake and Ogden chambers of commerce, Sigma Chi fraternity, and other professional and fraternal organizations.

Judge Murray, a native of Butte, received a bachelor's degree from George Washington University and an LL.B. from MSU. In 1936 he entered private law practice in Butte in association with J. F. Emigh.

After World War II naval service in the Pacific, he returned to practice in Butte and was appointed U.S. district judge for Western Montana in 1949. In 1955 he served temporarily with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. He is a former assistant U.S. attorney for Montana.

The jurist was the first recipient of the Carroll College Borromeo Award in 1960. He is active in MSU alumni affairs and is a past chairman of the MSU Law School Board of Visitors. At the dedication of the new MSU law building in 1961 he was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree.

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Dillon, 23, was drowned May 28, 1964, when heavy equipment he was using on a construction job near Missoula plunged through a bridge into the Clark Fork river. After a season as a defensive halfback with the Minnesota Vikings, he had returned to MSU in December to complete work on a business administration degree.

The Grizzly star's football jersey, number 22, which he wore for three years at MSU, was retired June 6 at memorial services at the University. The uniform was the first ever retired in the school's history.

Head football coach Hugh Davidson, who was backfield coach during Dillon's years on the team, says the popular athlete was involved in many campus activities. "He was the best boy I ever coached - a tremendous guy," Davidson says.

Dillon's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Merle Dillon, live in Irving, Tex.