

November 17-18, 2011

ITEM 153-1005-R1111

Professor Emeritus of History: William E. Farr; The University of Montana–Missoula

THAT

On the occasion of his retirement from the Department of History at The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation to Professor William E. Farr for his years of dedicated and valued service by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Bill Farr joined the faculty of The University of Montana in 1967, while still working on his Ph.D. from the University of Washington, a degree he completed in 1971. Bill began his career with the Department of History as a historian of medieval Europe, a subject he continued to teach until his retirement. His first book, *John Wyclif as Legal Reformer*, reflected his interest in medieval English intellectual history. Over the years, however, his interests changed. He began to teach and to do research in the history of the Blackfeet, and it is there that Bill Farr made his greatest mark.

By the end of the 1970s, Bill began to publish on subjects in Montana history and in the history of the Blackfeet. An important article, "Troubled Bundles, Troubled Blackfeet: The Travail of Cultural and Religious Renewal," appeared in *Montana, The Magazine of Western History* in 1993 and won the Montana Historical Society's Vivian A. Paladin Award for best article. It was reprinted in a collection of essays on Montana history in 2002.

Bill also began to write about Julius Seyler a German painter who painted, among other subjects, Glacier Park and the Blackfeet. This culminated in his book, *Julius Seyler and the Blackfeet: An Impressionist at Glacier National Park* (2009), a volume that represented Bill's rediscovery of a forgotten artist followed by a decade of archival work and of detective work into the provenance of works of art. The result was a restoration of Julius Seyler's role as a portrayer of the Blackfeet Indians during the Great War years. The book was rich in context and regional history, much of it presented for the first time in this volume.

In the last several years, Bill enhanced his scholarly reputation with three splendid articles. His substantial, 42-page "A Point of Entry: The Blackfeet Adoption of Walter McClintock" appeared in Steve Grafe's *Lanterns on the Prairie: The Blackfeet Photographs of Walter McClintock* (2009). "Putting Indians Back into the Wilderness Equation" was included in Pierre Lagayette's *Nature et Progres*, published in Paris in 2006. Another article, "Going to Buffalo," was also published in Paris, in *L'Exchange: Modalities et Representations* (2005).

In the opinion of Dan Flores, the Hammond Professor of History at The University of Montana, the book on Seyler is Bill's "best written work so far." At the same time, Professor Flores lauds Bill's other work and points particularly to Bill's 2-part article, "Going to Buffalo." According to Professor Flores, that work constitutes "a terrific original contribution on the movement of Columbia Plateau Indian peoples back and forth across the Continental Divide to hunt bison in the 18th and 19th centuries. Like most of [Bill's] work, it was all done from primary sources, since Bill has always tended to research problems where no real

secondary literature exists.” And Bill is not done yet. He has a book at press with the University of Oklahoma Press that is due out in 2012.

While his research and publication focused on Native American history for the past number of years, Bill continued to teach far more widely. He regularly offered his well-subscribed courses in Medieval European history. In addition, he taught in a popular, team-taught course, offered annually, called Regionalism and the Rocky Mountain West. He also developed a very successful graduate course in Indian history. His teaching evaluations across all these various courses were consistently strong. In addition, he served on the committees of several doctoral students and numerous MA students.

Bill served both the department and the University well. He was chair of the History department for a decade. Further, he was the driving force behind the creation of the O’Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West and its founding director from 1991 to 1996. After that, he served as associate director from 1996 to 2011. Bill’s service extended beyond the University. He organized and sponsored a major symposium in Kalispell, MT, to kick off the centennial celebration of the creation of Glacier National Park. Over the years, Bill developed extensive contacts among Indian students and people from various reservations and made them feel welcome at The University of Montana.

The History Department is honored to recommend Professor William E. Farr for the status of Professor of History emeritus.