

November 17-18, 2011

**ITEM 153-1007-R1111**

**Professor Emeritus of Physics and Astronomy: James P. Jacobs; The University of Montana–Missoula**

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**THAT**

After the retirement of Professor James P. Jacobs from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his years of dedicated and valued service to the University, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Davidson Honors College, and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred (posthumously) upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

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**EXPLANATION**

James P. Jacobs was born in Portland, Oregon. He earned his baccalaureate in Physics from the University of Oregon in 1985 and his doctorate in Physics from the University of Washington in 1991. His doctoral dissertation was on the *“Search for a Permanent Electric Dipole Moment on Mercury 199 Atoms as a Test of Time Reversal Symmetry.”* For the next two years he was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Washington and a lecturer at Seattle University.

James Jacobs came to the University of Montana in 1993 as an assistant professor in Physics. He developed his research laboratory on campus, receiving funding from the Research Corporation and the National Science Foundation, and established himself as an excellent physics instructor. In his years at UM, Jim completely revamped all of the laboratory physics classes. He believed that hands-on training in experimental physics was an essential part of the undergraduate physics curriculum. For many years Jim was the only instructor for the calculus-based introductory physics sequence. His engaging and inspiring teaching of this course contributed to a large increase in the number of physics majors during his years at UM. In 1997, he began the development of a general education, honors course in Einstein’s special theory of relativity. He taught this popular honors course for many years. In 1999, Jim was awarded the *Winston and Helen Cox Educational Excellence Award*. In 2009, he was awarded the *University of Montana Distinguished Teaching Award*. Jim served as chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy from 2002–2005. He was instrumental in increasing the number of faculty in the department and served as the chair of a number of search committees.

Jim relished sharing his love of science and inquiry with prospective students, especially Montanans. He always made time to visit with prospective students and their families, never failing to become a permanent mentor afterward. Several students have remembered fondly entering his office for campus directions and leaving enthused Physics majors. His influence didn’t just affect high school seniors. His entertaining and thought-provoking physics demonstrations at grade schools inspired a new generation of scientists, many of whom came to school at UM. He single-handedly brought hundreds of students to UM with his accessible and caring demeanor combined with rigorous expectation.