

January 6, 2022

**ITEM 198-1502-R0122**

**Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Literature upon Dr. Henry Gonshak -  
Montana Technological University**

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**THAT**

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Henry Gonshak from the faculty of Montana Technological University, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his years of dedication and valued service to the institution and the Department of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, and the State of Montana by recommending the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

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**EXPLANATION**

Henry Gonshak earned his BA in English with Distinction in 1980 from Vassar College, and his MA in English from the University of Denver in 1985. He received his PhD in English in 1988 from the University of Denver, where he concentrated on pre-20th century American literature. He earned distinction on his doctoral oral exams on 18th, 19th, and 20th-century American and British literature.

He came to Montana Tech in 1989 as Assistant Professor, after working two years as an instructor at Virginia Polytechnic and State University. He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1994 and then promoted to full professor in 1997. He is retiring in December 2021.

Since coming to Tech, Henry taught numerous courses in literature. Including British Literature, Introduction to Fiction, Montana Literature, World Literature, Shakespearean Drama, and Sports Literature. He has also contributed numerous writing courses, including College Writing I and II, Creative Writing, and Fiction Writing. His upper-level courses have been on the Holocaust (one of his major research topics) and Gay and Lesbian Studies.

He was awarded a Rose and Anna Busch Endowed Professorship for outstanding work in teaching, research, and service. Since being awarded it in 2000, it has been renewed every five years and he currently holds it at present.

Henry has written a number of pieces for various publications, but his major work is the book Hollywood and the Holocaust, by Rowman and Littlefield in 2015. This work studies Hollywood films about the Shoah from the World War II era to present, from classics like Charlie Chaplin's The Great Dictator to more recent works like Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List and Quentin Tarantino's Inglourious Basterds. Henry examines the question of what criteria should be used when judging Hollywood films and makes the controversial assertion that comedy can be an effective means of portraying the Shoah. He explores why Hollywood seems so fascinated with the subject of the Holocaust, and calls on the American movie industry to make more nuanced films. This includes about other historical genocides, and about the Holocaust itself, since it encompassed what Primo Levi's called an ethical "grey zone," devoid of clear-cut heroes and villains.

Henry also has been a frequent contributor to the Montana Professor and the Montana Standard, serving in the role of a public intellectual and as an assistant editor of the former publication. He has served extensively on campus committees as well, including chairing the Faculty Senate and sitting on the Collegiate Evaluation Committee and the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee.

With this recommendation, we thank Dr. Henry Gonshak for 33 years of outstanding service to Montana Tech and request to confer the title of "Professor Emeritus of Literature."

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**ATTACHMENTS**

None