



August 19, 2025

Members of the Montana Board of Regents
c/o Commissioner Clayton T. Christian
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
2500 Broadway Street
P.O. Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Members of the Board of Regents,

It is my honor to present the attached Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters nomination packet for UM alumnus Lana Batts. This nomination has been through the campus process, including action by the appropriate department/college level. The Faculty Senate at the University of Montana will review this nomination during the executive session of their September meeting.

The former President of the Truckload Carriers Association and Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the American Trucking Association, Lana Batts is described as “a standout figure in the transportation sector.” During her decades in the trucking industry, Batts is credited with revitalizing the Professional Truck Driver Institute and creating the Truckload Academy while also being a leading policy advocate and a trailblazer for women in the transportation sector. Batts’ impact on the trucking industry also includes service on numerous corporate boards, co-founding Driver iQ, a full-service background screening company for the trucking industry, and serving as a managing partner at Transport Capital Partners, an investment firm specializing in mergers and acquisitions of trucking companies. She has received numerous awards for her transformative career, including the Lee Crittenden Memorial Award and the Truckload Carriers Associations’ Past Chairmen’s Award.

A native of Billings, Montana, Lana Batts graduated from the University of Montana in 1968 with a Bachelor’s in History and Political Science. While at UM, Batts honed her communication skills on the UM debate team, and her athletic skills on the UM luge team. Batts even qualified for the USA Olympics luge team but was unfortunately not able to compete due to an injury. Batts further education includes a 1978 Master’s degree in Politics and Public Affairs from the University of Miami.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Batts is also a dedicated member of the Glacier National Park Conservancy Board of Directors, the Flathead Lake Biological Station Advisory Board, and supporter of the Montana Museum of Art and Culture, Montana Audubon, and the Missoula Butterfly Museum. The attached nomination packet highlights the magnitude of Lana Batts’ community service work.

For her many professional accomplishments and impressive work in community service, Lana Batts has my full support as an exceptional candidate for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seth Bodnar".

Seth Bodnar
President

Office of the President



Recommendation of Lana Batts for Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters

2025 Fall Commencement



July 18, 2025

Seth Bodnar, President
University of Montana
32 Campus Dr.
Missoula, MT 59812

RE: Letter of Support for Lana Richards Batts – Honorary Doctorate Nomination

Dear President Bodnar,

It is with great admiration and enthusiasm that I write in support of awarding an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana to Lana Richards Batts, a distinguished alumna whose pioneering contributions to American industry, commitment to public service, and deep-rooted support of education and conservation make her a remarkably qualified candidate for this honor.

Born and raised in Billings, Lana's Montana roots shaped both her grit and determination. She earned her B.A. in History and Political Science at the University of Montana, where she excelled not only in the classroom but also as a member of the university debate team—a formative experience that helped sharpen the persuasive communication skills she would later bring to the national stage. She went on to receive a master's degree in Politics and Public Affairs from the University of Miami, further deepening her knowledge of public policy and setting the stage for her future leadership in national transportation policy and advocacy.

One of the lesser-known parts of Lana's story reflects the adventurous spirit and boldness she brought to many aspects of her life: from 1965 to 1968, she was a member of the University of Montana luge team. Lana qualified for the USA Olympic luge squad, but an injury in 1968 brought that chapter to a close. Though short-lived, her time in the sport remains a memorable part of her journey, reflecting the determination and willingness to take on challenges that have marked her career.

Lana began her career in 1973 at the American Trucking Associations (ATA) as a transportation analyst—the highest-paid woman but the lowest-paid professional. Undeterred, she steadily rose through the ranks, ultimately becoming Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at ATA, and later, President of the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA). She co-founded Driver IQ, served on the boards of numerous transportation companies including Brown Trucking, SeaBridge International, and Mullen Transportation, Inc., and helped shape key industry standards—revamping the Professional Truck Driver Institute, creating the Truckload Academy, and advocating early for the Commercial Driver's License.

Throughout her career, Lana remained a passionate advocate for women in trucking, often reflecting on how, despite growing up in a trucking family, it never occurred to her that she could run her father's company—because women were only seen in back-office roles. Her leadership has helped change that narrative for countless others.

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Lana's commitment to conservation and education has been both long-standing and deeply impactful. Together with her husband Joe, she has been a generous benefactor to numerous Montana institutions. She currently serves on the boards of the Glacier National Park Conservancy and the Flathead Lake Biological Station Advisory Board. Their philanthropic support includes major contributions to the Montana Museum of Art and Culture, where a gallery bears their name, and to the Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium. At the University of Montana, they have provided consistent and often unrestricted support, allowing for maximum impact across a wide range of departments and programs—including History, Political Science, Communication Studies, and the Bird Ecology Lab.

Her long list of accolades includes trucking's S. Earl Dove Award, the Woman of the Year Award from the Women's Transportation Seminar, and the University of Montana's Distinguished Alumni Award in 2019. Most recently, she and Joe were honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from Montana Audubon at the 2025 *Wings Across the Big Sky* festival.

Lana has never been afraid to take the fast, uncertain track—whether on ice, in boardrooms, or in federal policymaking circles. Her legacy is one of leadership, resilience, and generous service to her community, her industry, and her alma mater. Her life reflects the best of what the University of Montana aims to instill in its students: courage, intellect, and a commitment to making the world better.

It is without reservation that I urge you to bestow this well-deserved honor upon Lana Richards Batts.

Sincerely,



Alison Schultz
Senior Director of Planned Giving
University of Montana Foundation

August 06, 2025

Seth Bodnar, President
University of Montana
32 Campus Dr.
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear President Bodnar,

It is with great enthusiasm and unwavering support that I write this letter on behalf of Lana Batts and her nomination for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana.

I have had the privilege of knowing Lana since the early 1990s, when she served as the Senior Vice President of Government Affairs at the American Trucking Associations. Even then, Lana was already a standout figure in the transportation sector—widely recognized as the “go-to” authority for anyone needing a deep understanding of the industry’s complexities. In an era when few women held leadership roles in trucking, Lana’s presence, influence, and professionalism not only earned her respect but also paved the way for others.

Lana’s career has been marked by impactful leadership, including her tenure as President of the Truckload Carriers Association, a nationally respected organization representing many of the largest and most influential employers in the country. Throughout her career, she has built and maintained relationships with lawmakers, regulators, business leaders, and innovators—helping shape national policy and industry standards.

On a personal level, Lana has had a profound impact on my professional life. When I was considering launching a business to serve the trucking industry, she was the first person I called. Not only did she offer candid, thoughtful, and practical advice—she jumped in with both feet and became my co-founder. True to form, Lana poured her heart into the endeavor, bringing her characteristic work ethic, razor-sharp intellect, and unwavering integrity. She is the kind of professional who sets the bar high, expects excellence, and leads by example. Simply put, if you know Lana, you are a better person for it. What a gem.

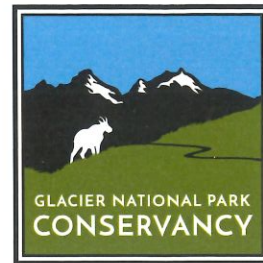
Lana Batts has not only made significant contributions to the transportation industry—she has also demonstrated the highest levels of leadership, service, and personal character. I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition. Thank you for considering her for this well-earned and meaningful honor.

Sincerely,

Billie Lee
President, Driver iQ

July 24, 2025

Seth Bodnar, President
University of Montana
32 Campus Dr.
Missoula, MT 59812



Dear Dr. Bodnar: *SBH*

It is my distinct pleasure to submit this letter to support the University's recognition of an extraordinary person, Lana Batts, by conferring upon her an honorary doctorate.

Lana has served on our Board of Directors for a number of years. She has chaired our Development Committee, and is now in her third year as Vice Chair. Her commitment, kindness, work ethic, and courage make me, and make all of us as an organization, better. I first met Lana over coffee at Montana Coffee Traders here in Columbia Falls. At the time, she was on the board of Montana Audubon, and had set-up the meeting to find ways the Glacier Conservancy might be able to increase its support for projects in Glacier National Park that might provide partnership opportunities for Montana Audubon. I knew right away that I needed this person on MY board.

In her board service she's led by example, insisted on high standards, incubated innovation, and been the first to contribute generously of her time, talent, and treasure. But it's more than that. Lana Batts is special, and deserving of the high honor you are considering for her not just because of what she does, but because of who she is.

She is the person you call on when you need help. She's the person you lean on when you have a tough problem to solve. She's the example you point out when you inspire someone to excellence. She's whip smart, is a strong and effective advocate, and truly loves the University of Montana.

Others will share with you the significance of her professional accomplishments. They are many, and deserving of exploration and recognition. As someone who has come to know Lana in her retirement, I see her through a lens of service. She and Joe have made a lifestyle decision to serve their community and to invest in making sure our kids and grandkids have the kind of opportunities we enjoy. I see that every day in her service on our Board of Directors, and I am sure you see it in her service to the University she holds so dear.

My former boss, U.S. Senator and Ambassador to China Max Baucus, likes to say that service is the most noble human endeavor. If that is true, and I think it is, you will be honoring a truly noble person by conferring on Lana Batts an honorary doctorate from her beloved University of Montana.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]
DOUG MITCHELL
Executive Director



PO Box 2749
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

Working to preserve and protect Glacier
National Park for future generations.

406.892.3250
www.glacier.org



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Missoula, MT 59812
museum@mso.umt.edu
406-243-2019

August 12, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It gives me great pleasure to support the university's acknowledgement of Lana Richards Batts. Lana strikes me as not only among the most loyal alumnae of the university, but also the finest representative of a lifelong learner who never ceased to explore and grow beyond her original years at UM. Moreover, Lana has proven to be the most dedicated supporter of critical inquiry, stepping up where there is a challenge and an opportunity. She is among the most curious and dedicated individuals I have ever met.

Lana's relationship with the Montana Museum of Art and Culture began when she and her husband Joe visited the exhibition "Avis marvelous: Ornithology in 19th Century Art and Science" in fall 2021. The exhibition was a first because it was co-curated between our museum staff and UM's Philip L. Wright Zoological Museum. It presented the ways artists and scientists analyzed, documented, and celebrated avian life in the 19th century through art, publications, and other printed works. It also recreated museum displays with specimens from the Wright meant to educate and enlighten the public about bird life in the Americas.

Avid birders themselves, Lana and Joe were taken with the vision of the show. Lana, in particular, wanted to know more, not just about the exhibition's content and communication strategies, but also about the museum's novel partnership with students and faculty in the biological sciences. To her, this kind of exhibition represented not just the coming together art and science, but also of great minds bridging compelling ideas and she wanted to support the effort.

She not only committed to supporting us, but she has likewise extended her support to other institutions. We are aware of how generous and committed she has been to the Audubon Society of Montana, the Glacier Conservancy, and the Missoula Butterfly Museum.

Lana has been a consistent supporter of the MMAC's cause. In 2023, she and Joe supported the museum's efforts with a substantial gift to our building campaign. We proudly named a prominent gallery in their names and are happy to report that they have not missed an exhibition at the museum since we opened our doors in September 2023. Moreover, the Batts have continuously supported the museum with a major contribution to our Operations & Management Endowment and other financial gifts in support of our regular operations and programming. We admire Lana's gumption, the way she consistently steps up with a friendly, "How can I help?"

Suffice to say that we consider Lana among our closest and most dedicated friends and champions. It is not simply that she understands the actual needs of the institution, but she shares our values and educational mission. She knows that the arts are a central part of the informed life and she understands that they are catalysts for personal reflection as well as collective questioning.

That support allows us to function as a central part of the UM experience for the entire academic community.

We wholeheartedly join the initiative to acknowledge and celebrate Lana Batts.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "H. Rafael Chacón". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

H. Rafael Chacón, Ph.D.
Bruce and Suzanne Crocker Director,
Montana Museum of Art and Culture and
Professor of Art History and Criticism,
School of Visual and Media Arts