

September 18, 2025

ITEM 220-1002-R0925

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Music on Dr. Robert LedBetter; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Dr. Robert LedBetter from the University of Montana, the School of Music faculty express appreciation for his 35 years of dedicated and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

The School of Music and the College of the Arts and Media proudly commend and thank Dr. LedBetter for 35 years of extraordinary teaching, artistic excellence, and service at the University of Montana.

Throughout his tenure, he distinguished himself as a gifted educator, celebrated performing artist, and respected colleague in the world music community, evidenced by the numerous relationships fostered with global artists who regularly visited our campus.

Dr. LedBetter's percussion studio was highly regarded throughout the region during his career at the University of Montana. His high pedagogical standards and detailed instruction instilled an unmatched work ethic among his students, showcased in their annual percussion ensemble concerts. Dr. LedBetter developed a strong community of supporters throughout the Missoula community and region, and patrons prioritized attending UM's Percussion Ensemble and World Percussion Ensemble concerts under his leadership.

Dr. LedBetter's commitment to music education is evidenced by his highly successful students who have gone on to serve our state as K-12 teachers, while others have been accepted to prestigious graduate programs and have had successful teaching careers in higher education and private students. Many have found success as performers in a variety of genres including classical, jazz, popular and commercial music.

Service and Impact

The School of Music wishes to highlight Dr. LedBetter's commitment to service at the school, university, and state and regional level. He served as instructor and clinician for UM festivals including All-Star Bands, Concert Band, and the Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival and was a dedicated faculty member for our UM Summer Music Camps. We celebrate his many years as director of UM's *Islanders* Steel Band, West African Drum Ensemble, Salsa Band, Brazilian Ensemble, Mexican Marimba Band, and *Jaya Budya* Balinese Gamelan Orchestra (Indonesian percussion orchestra). Dr. LedBetter led members of the gamelan on two trips to Bali, Indonesia (2012 and 2016), providing transformative experiences for our students. Additionally, the UM Islanders Steel Band has released three recordings, titled *Summer Songs*, *Pandemonium*, and *A Steel Band Christmas*.

We are happy to include the link to Dr. LedBetter's final UM World Rhythms Concert (May 2, 2026, Dennison Theatre):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XGkVC_j7QI

The School of Music is proud to nominate Professor Robert LedBetter for emeritus status, celebrating a faculty member who contributed profoundly to teaching, artistry, and service. His impact is evidenced by

the outstanding accomplishments of his students, the unique knowledge he brought to our program and campus for over three decades, and the sense of community he fostered for students and colleagues at the University of Montana.

ATTACHMENTS

None