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WWW.UMWFUNDATION.ORG

Nov. 28, 2012

Campus Development Committee
c/o Susan Briggs, Vice Chancellor of Administration & Finance/Student Affairs
710 S. Atlantic St.
Dillon, MT 59725

Re: University property naming

Dear Campus Development Committee,

The University of Montana Western Fine Arts Department, the UMW Foundation and Emerick Trustees would like to propose re-naming the newly renovated Art Annex on the Montana Western campus to honor Mary Baker Emerick's unprecedented contributions to this institution.

Without a doubt, Mary Baker Emerick has single-handedly left the largest imprint on Montana Western history with her generous donation to our campus and fine arts department. Her enduring contributions to Montana Western warrant a lasting tribute to her legacy, and I can think of no more fitting gesture than to name Montana Western's newly renovated fine arts complex after this remarkable woman.

We hereby propose to change the name of the Art Annex to "Emerick Art Studio."

Thank you for considering our request. Should you need further information, please don't hesitate to contact me at (406) 683-7305.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roxanne G. Engellant".

Roxanne G. Engellant
UMW Foundation Executive Director

Outline of importance of the naming to the University

The history of the art department at the University of Montana Western can easily be divided into pre-Emerick, Emerick and post-Emerick eras. Mary Baker Emerick, who was privately known as "Ma" Emerick towards the end of her career, has had a profound influence on the maturation of the art department at Montana Western.

Mary Baker, who had been a training school penmanship and art instructor since 1925, filled in for Eldora Ragon who went on leave in 1930. She made a sound enough impression to be hired as a faculty member to serve along Ragon in 1932. From then until 1968, Mary was the dominant member of the art faculty.

When Mary Baker arrived she listened to the student requests for an art club and initiated this club in 1932. A limited membership and high standards for admittance were required. Over the years this club proved to be the focal point of the department. The point system for recognition was strict and complicated. It was difficult to enter the club and sustain membership. The charter claimed, "the purpose of the club is to foster interest in art." This it did, as attested by many art students. Because it was one of the most popular clubs on campus many people joined, but only the ones dedicated to art seemed to survive. Those who did survive, experienced the many projects conjured up by Mary and her dedicated members.

A gift shop was started and students worked to fill its shelves with every known functional art object. Profits were used to provide funds for the first art scholarship.

It was recognized by Mrs. Emerick that some members of the department wanted to spend more time on "fine art," and using her tendency to foster motivation by special organization, she founded in 1937 the Kappa Pi Omicron chapter. This was a national fine arts honorary fraternity. Over the years this became the department's senior group and initiated many art shows, guest speakers, and field trips. Members continued to be active after graduation, and this group generally sustained their art over the years.

Upon conclusion of her 43-year career at Western, she was awarded Professor of Art Emeritus rank by University system regents in acknowledgment and appreciation of "her personal interest in students, her encouragement of their potential talents and the teaching, counseling and guidance which she so unselfishly provided."

Following her death in 1981, trusts totaling over \$700,000 were willed to Montana Western from Emerick's estate. One of these bequests funds generous scholarships annually for new and

returning art students and the other is designated for books and equipment to advance campus art programs. Today the art scholarships are the largest and most far reaching on the Montana Western campus. The gift that Mary Baker Emerick left UMW and the art department grew greatly in the 90's due to the investments in the market. Over the years, this gift has impacted thousands of fine art and art education students.

Without a doubt, Mary Baker Emerick has single-handedly left the largest imprint on Montana Western history with her commitment to art education and her generous donation to our fine arts department. Her enduring contributions to Montana Western warrant a lasting tribute to her legacy, and I can think of no more fitting gesture than to name Montana Western's newly renovated fine arts complex after this remarkable woman.