



April 10, 2020

Commissioner Clayton Christian
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
560 North Park Avenue
Helena, Montana 59620-3201

Dear Commissioner Christian:

This is a request for the Board of Regents to confirm the recommendation of an honorary degree, for Taylor Brown, to be awarded at Montana State University's (MSU) commencement ceremony on Saturday, December 19, 2020. Taylor Brown's nomination was recently approved by the Montana State University Faculty Senate.

Taylor Brown (Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters):

Taylor Brown is a third-generation Montana rancher from Sand Springs, Montana and a two-term state senator with an impressive career in television and radio broadcasting spanning over 40 years. He received his B.S. degree in Animal Science from Montana State University in 1979.

While earning his degree in Animal Science at MSU, Taylor served as student body president in 1977. Upon graduating from MSU in 1979, Taylor returned to the family ranch to consider his future, including an offer from then NBS owner Conrad Burns. In 1979, Taylor started his 40-year and counting broadcasting career with Northern Ag Network. Since Taylor and his wife, Shannon, took over Northern Broadcasting, it has grown from four employees to 11, and in 2010, they bought their first radio station, KGHL AM-790, the oldest station in Billings. Northern Broadcasting System consists of the Northern Ag Network, the Northern News Network, the Northern Sports Network and KGHL AM-790 and FM 94.7. The networks reach more than 70 stations in four states, delivering a wide spectrum of radio, television and digital content that deals with agriculture, weather, news, sports and talk.

Taylor has also committed himself to the sustainment of agriculture in Montana through service and outreach. He is an advocate for rural farm and ranch families and is a supporter of 4-H, FFA, Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and the REAL Montana leadership program. In 2009, Taylor launched the Ag information website, NorthernAg.NET which became Montana's most popular website among Class 1 Ag Producers. Anyone who knows or works with Taylor Brown in any capacity knows how much he gives personally to a great many causes, and how he uses his own company as an example of how business leaders can make a difference. Not only does he donate generously of his personal time, but he gives direct financial support to many worthwhile programs.

Office of the President

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Taylor served two terms as a state senator from 2009-2016, including chairman of both the Agriculture and Education Committees, as well as being elected Majority Whip. He was a member of the original Organizing Committee of Leadership Montana, Treasurer of Montana Range Days, Chairman of Montana State University College of Agriculture Volunteer Committee and was elected as Montana's first President of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting in 1992. This allowed him the opportunity to improve the understanding of the role that farm and ranch businesses play in the nation's economic picture.

Additionally, he served as the first Chairman of the College of Agriculture Development Board and headed a grassroots movement to raise 60% of the funding for the \$15.7 million Animal Bioscience Building by enlisting nearly 200 ranchers and businesses in the "Ranchers Circle" to fund the new permanent home of the MSU Animal and Range Sciences Department.

We wholeheartedly support the nomination of Taylor Brown for an honorary doctorate degree at Montana State University. As evident by the numerous letters of support, Taylor Brown's sense of community, commitment to Montana, and his passion for the land-grant mission of Montana State University clearly distinguishes him as one of MSU's most outstanding graduates.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of Taylor Brown as an honorary doctorate nominee, as the students, faculty and staff of Montana State University would be so proud to honor Taylor Brown at our upcoming commencement.

Sincerely,



Waded Cruzado
President