



June 6, 2022

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,

I am pleased to nominate Emma Bravo Lommasson for a posthumous Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. This nomination has been through the campus process, including action at the appropriate department/college level as well as action by the Faculty Senate in executive session. Included with this letter, you will find a complete nomination packet for the candidate.

Emma Lommasson's tenure at the University of Montana began in 1929 when she moved from Sand Coulee, Montana, to Missoula to enroll as an undergraduate student. Earning a degree in Mathematics in 1933 (with a minor in Chemistry), Emma left UM briefly to teach before returning to earn her master's in Mathematics in 1939. Upon completing her M.A., Emma began her legendary career at UM.

Originally serving as an instructor in the Department of Mathematics, Emma also taught Navigation and Civil Air Regulations during World War II to prepare students for service in the U.S. Air Force. Emma was appointed as UM's first Veterans Advisor and the Assistant Registrar following the war, while also serving as the advisor to the Air Force ROTC Angel Flight for 17 years. Prior to her retirement in 1977, Emma served as the first female Acting/Interim Registrar at UM. As a retiree, she continued to volunteer as a part-time advisor for another decade, and as an informal academic advisor for years after that.

Emma Lommasson's dedication to UM and its students led to UM naming a building in her honor in 2002. She also received numerous UM awards during her lifetime (Faculty Senate Award, Distinguished Alumni Award, the Robert T. Pantzer Presidential Humanitarian Award and the Outstanding Volunteer Award), but was never bestowed with an Honorary Doctorate prior to her death at the age of 107 in 2019.

Emma Bravo Lommasson has my full support as an exceptional candidate for a posthumous honorary doctorate at the University of Montana. Thank you for your consideration of this iconic member of the UM family.

Sincerely,

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

Seth Bodnar  
President

Office of the President



Recommendation of  
Emma Lommasson  
for Honorary  
Doctorate of  
Humane Letters



May 4, 2022

Reed Humphrey  
University of Montana  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear Reed,

I write to officially nominate Emma B. Lommasson for a posthumous Honorary Doctorate from the University of Montana.

Emma B. Lommasson's legacy is well known in the Registrar's Office at the University of Montana. We affectionately refer to her as "Emma B," and we hope to rename our Aber Hall floor in her honor. As the only other female in UM's history to hold the title of "Acting/Interim Registrar," Emma tirelessly embodied the value of putting students first.

Emma Lommasson attended UM as an undergraduate student from 1929-1933, eventually earning a master of arts degree. She taught mathematics courses at UM. As World War II ended, her campus role shifted to serving veterans who sought higher education opportunities.

Working directly with students was her passion and fueled her boundless energy. After working in several roles within the Registrar's Office from 1946-1977, Emma "retired" at age 68. She then volunteered her time working with students until she turned 80. Her long, rich life is a testament to the hundreds of students who benefitted from her meticulous attention to detail and her advocacy.

As the first (permanent) female Registrar to serve UM, I directly benefit from the path she forged. An honorary doctorate for this charismatic and loyal UM alumna/retiree is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Maria Mangold  
Registrar

**Office of the Registrar**

Aber Hall 623 | Missoula, Montana 59812 | P: 406-243-5600 | E: [registration@umontana.edu](mailto:registration@umontana.edu)

May 4, 2022

Dr. Reed Humphrey  
Acting Provost  
Main Hall  
University of Montana  
Missoula, MT 59812

Re: Letter of Support for the Nomination of Emma Bravo Lommasson for a Posthumous Honorary Doctorate

Dear Provost Humphrey,

Emma Bravo Lommasson left an indelible mark on the University of Montana and the University's students whom she lovingly and faithfully served for decades. As one of Emma's friends and admirers, I write in support of her nomination for a honorary doctorate. What a shame the University did not bestow this much-deserved honor on Emma during her lifetime!

In reflecting on her almost life-long relationship with the University of Montana, Emma often said to me that the University was her home and the students were her life. In fact, Emma's love of and dedication to the University of Montana began in the fall of 1929 when, at age 17, she left her home in Sand Coulee, Montana and enrolled as a freshman at the University. Majoring in Mathematics (and minoring Chemistry), Emma distinguished herself as a diligent and talented student. Following her graduation in 1933, she taught school for four years in Sand Coulee before returning to the University of Montana in 1937 to serve as an assistant to Dr. N.J. Lennes, the Chair of the Department of Mathematics. Emma earned her M.A. in Mathematics at the University in 1939 and subsequently became an instructor in the Department of Mathematics. During World War II, Emma, in addition to teaching math courses, also taught Navigation and Civil Air Regulations to students training for service in the U.S. Air Force. Following the war, the University tapped Emma to be its first Veterans' Advisor as well as the Assistant Registrar. In addition, she served for seventeen years as the advisor to the Air Force ROTC Angel Flight. In 1973 she assumed the position of Registrar. Although she officially retired from the University in 1977, Emma continued to volunteer in the Registrar's Office for another ten years as a part-time student advisor. Even after those volunteer-service years, Emma continued to visit with and provide informal academic advising to University students. Truly, the University was her home and students were her life!

The guidance and encouragement Emma Lommasson provided to the returning veterans of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War as well as to generations of other University students were never forgotten. Until the time of her death in November 2019, Emma regularly received phone calls, cards and letters, and visits from veterans and other students

whom she assisted during her many decades of service at the University. For the thousands of students whose lives she influenced, Emma was truly “the heart of the University of Montana.”

In recognition of her exemplary service to students, faculty, staff, and administrators, Emma was the recipient of numerous University of Montana awards, including both a Faculty Senate Award and Distinguished Alumni Award in 1977, the Robert T. Pantzer Presidential Humanitarian Award in 1979, and the University’s Outstanding Volunteer Award in 1987. In addition, the University in 2002 named the Lodge (the campus student services center) the Emma B. Lommasson Center. Given Emma Lommasson’s unparalleled history of service to the University of Montana, the awarding of an honorary doctorate to her (albeit three years after her death) will reflect the value the University places on service while also highlighting the role Emma Bravo Lommasson played as a guide and role model to generations of University of Montana students. In view of the demolition of the Emma B. Lommasson Center, it is my fervent hope that, in addition to awarding the honorary doctorate, the University will memorialize Emma’s profound legacy by naming another prominent campus building or office in honor of her.

Sincerely,

J. Martin Burke  
Professor Emeritus  
School of Law

*Sheila M. Stearns*

To: Awards Review  
University of Montana

Date: Spring 2022

I would like to support the nomination of Emma Lommasson for a posthumous honorary degree. She is a legend at the university, for good reason.

Emma once told me that in her poor family, there was just one bed for the three daughters. Her parents asked her to sleep between her sisters because she could make it work. That is an early sign that wherever Emma went and whatever Emma undertook, her personal intelligence and leadership made the difference.

Her leadership and achievements were exemplary in many ways; I will mention just three.

First, as UM's long-serving, ground-breaking Registrar. She learned the "how-to" part quickly, and then developed an office capable of managing the expanding enrollments of the Baby Boom. She smoothly embraced new people and technologies, and ushered in change in graceful ways.

Second, she took extraordinary interest in individual students. From George Dennison to my siblings and me, and thousands of others, when she learned of any student who encountered a vexing personal issue affecting our enrollment, she inquired and assisted, kindly and wisely.

Third, she mentored hundreds, maybe thousands, of students and staff members to aspire to leadership roles in her office, in other campus departments, and in their future careers. Her assistance was low-key, gracious, and effective.

These and other leadership qualities left her elegant footprint on several generations of Montana students, and on the University of Montana writ large. She was a walking definition of grace under pressure, and breaking-the-mold leadership.

*Sheila M. Stearns*  
Educator



June 10, 2022

Reed Humphrey, Acting Provost  
University of Montana

Dear Provost Humphrey,

We are delighted to submit this joint letter of support for the post-humous nomination of Emma Lommasson for an Honorary Doctorate. During our time serving in the President's office for the University of Montana, we came to know Emma well and view her as the embodiment of the tremendous spirit of UM.

Emma had an exceptionally long and distinguished career at UM, always centered on serving students. She, herself, was a UM student, receiving Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University. She taught mathematics, served as Veteran's Advisor, Advisor to the R.O.T.C. Auxiliary, and of course, Registrar. She even volunteered for about ten years after retirement in the Registrar's Office.

In addition to the more tangible aspects of her work at UM, the most enviable characteristics of Emma were her absolute graciousness and humility. She would express such gratitude to receive us as visitors, always indicating her surprise that we would take time to visit. In fact, the privilege was ours, as we thoroughly enjoyed hearing her stories and seeing that twinkle in her eye regarding anything related to UM. Up until the end of her long and fascinating life, Emma's eyes and her smile would light up when we came into her room.

She had many stories that she enjoyed telling. She actually lived in the President's residence during her younger years, as she served as the secretary for Nels Lennes, the owner of the house and Chair of the Mathematics Department. Professor Lennes was the author of successful math textbooks and Emma was the person who typed all of those complicated manuscripts and prepared them for publication. Emma had a mischievous look in her eye when she told us that she and the Lennes' housemaid would sneak out of the house together to go roller-skating.

Another favorite story of Emma's was her work training pilots in the skills of navigation during WWII. She told of how they would tease her for not ever flying, and eventually goaded her into a flight with one of the pilots. She was determined not to get sick on the rather wild flight, and because of that earned the respect of those aviators.

Her work with military personnel was only one way in which Emma helped generations of students at UM. Certainly, her official duties were an important part of her work with students, but more important was the personal interest she took in her students, often serving as an informal advisor and confidant to them. She often remarked when questioned about the length of her service to UM, that she loved being around the students because they kept her young.

Emma was also quite proud of her heritage, and she told us the stories of her mother coming to America from Italy on her own, walking the last few miles to the ranch of the man she came to marry. It is no surprise that Emma possessed the same determination and spunk as her mother.

We have several pictures of Emma in our house that we cherish. One is of the two of us sitting with Emma on the occasion of a former student donating a bench in her honor, a bench which sits outside the Lommasson Center. Another is a picture of Emma and Royce when the footbridge lighting project was completed and the switch was flipped. We're not sure which was brighter, the lights of the bridge or Emma's face. In her later years, Mary especially spent time with Emma, having lunch together and listening to stories. Mary treasures the fact that they became close friends.

There is no doubt that Emma was a special person in the life of the University of Montana. Countless students owe their degrees and their success to this small, mighty, and compassionate woman who spent more years associated with UM than just perhaps anyone else in the University's history. We are proud to support her nomination.

Sincerely,

Royce and Mary Engstrom  
Past-President and First Lady  
University of Montana



806 Janis Drive  
Missoula, MT 59804

May 2022

Dr. Reed Humphrey, Acting Provost  
University of Montana  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear Acting Provost Humphrey:

Recommendation: Emma Lommasson – Honorary Doctorate

I have been asked to write a letter in support of awarding an honorary doctorate, posthumously, to Emma Lommasson. As a forty-year employee of the university beginning in 1970, I had the opportunity and pleasure to work directly with Emma from those early days and often even after her retirement. Here are just some of the reasons from my perspective:

- The 70's

In those early days of the 70's, as a computer programmer, I worked with Emma on registration in the Field House using Hollerith computer cards to enroll students. She was a willing leader in this "new" field using technology to register students! The key word here is that we all worked "with" Emma, not necessarily "for" her embodying the inclusiveness of her work ethic.

Over this decade, it was obvious that Emma had students first in her mind and she was instrumental in forming my own philosophy on how we worked with and treated students. During this time Dr. Phil Bain was named Registrar and her influence continued as we moved forward with technology and other innovations.

- The 80's

In the mid 80's I was honored to become the Director of Financial Aid and Emma was still present advising students and having a keen interest in how we, in student financial aid, could assist students. I relied on her wisdom as I learned the keys to always keeping students first in every decision.

- The 90's

Now in her 60<sup>th</sup> year since arriving on campus, Emma continued connecting with student financial aid and 'assisting' with special students often in an anonymous manner. I have no idea of how many students she helped, but what became obvious to me was that it not only included counseling, but in many cases financial help which was always done in a very quiet and confidential manner.

It was also during this time that student affairs leaders, namely Charlie Thorne and Ron Brunell, initiated the request to President Dennison to honor Emma by renaming the Lodge to the Emma B. Lommasson Center. She was extremely proud of this special recognition. It was her pride and joy to return nearly each year after with birthday celebrations provided by Mark LoParko's Dining Services. Unlike we administrators, the students that sang a robust "happy birthday" had no real understanding of what this person had contributed to the University of Montana.

In closing, there is no one more deserving to be awarded an honorary doctorate than Emma B. Lommasson. Who else in the history of Montana has given their entire life to this institution, let alone eight decades? She lived a long, beautiful life dedicated to helping thousands of students and scores of administrators become better people and contributors to society. My only regret is that this nomination was not introduced in a timeframe where she could have experienced the enjoyment of this great honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mick Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mick Hanson

23 May 2022

Provost Reed Humphrey  
Office of the Provost  
125 University Hall  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula MT 59812

Re: **Emma Lommasson's nomination for a UM Honorary Doctorate**

To whom it may concern:

With exuberant enthusiasm, I write in support of awarding the late Emma Bravo Lommasson an honorary doctorate from UM. With her ever-positive outlook, her passion for lifelong learning, her eminent wisdom, and her love of all-things UM, Ms. Lommasson embodied the spirit of UM—and higher education in general—like no other. It would be difficult, or impossible really, to think of a more suitable person on whom to bestow this distinction.

Ms. Lommasson earned two mathematics degrees from our university in the 1930s—a bachelor's and a master's—and later served the institution in many influential roles. Other writers will comment on these, but as a mathematician myself, I'll keep a mathematical (and personal) focus.

Starting in the late 1930s, Emma served both as an Instructor and an Assistant in the Math Department. At the time, a prominent scholar from the University of Chicago, N.J. Lennes, was Math's department Head. Dr. Lennes was a prolific textbook writer, and as his Assistant, Ms. Lommasson had the job of typing and correcting his manuscripts and also producing the solution manuals.

I had the pleasure to discuss their writing process with Emma several times. Though she graciously belied the arrangement's reality, I could tell immediately that by today's standards, Emma B. Lommasson would be a coauthor of several of Lennes' texts. This would have been lucrative—funded in part by his book profits, Lennes built the mansion that currently serves as the UM President's residence (and where Emma herself even lived for a spell!).

With Ms. Lommasson retiring in the 1970s, and me not arriving until the 90s, it may seem surprising that we even got to know each other. But Emma had a soft spot in her heart for mathematics, and she kept close ties with our department until her passing. For example, when UM's Women's Hall (now the Mathematics Building) turned 100 in 2003, Emma attended the special lecture to commemorate the event. It was through these sorts of activities that I came to know and admire this incredible human being.



I mentioned optimism, passion for learning, wisdom, and love of UM in my opening paragraph. One couldn't know Emma Lommasson even a little without noticing these qualities.

After Emma turned 100, I began a habit of calling her regularly on the phone. Without exception, I always felt uplifted after our conversations. She enjoyed being surrounded by 'young' people, and I—in my fifties(!)—counted as young. The uplift was a direct consequence of her optimism and wisdom; the first rubbed off on me and the second I felt ever-so-fortunate to be carrying into my own life.

In 2013, I enjoyed the privilege of giving a campuswide lecture: *1, 2, 3.14 . . . Familiar Figures, Fresh Facts*. Knowing Emma's love of mathematics, I invited her to attend, and to my great honor, she accepted. In my excitement of the moment, the talk went overtime. Feeling irresponsible about this, I called her the next day, but she didn't miss a beat: "Nonsense," she said, "if a hundred-and-one-year-old can stay engaged past the hour, then they all can! I looked up there and saw that 'three point one four', and it just took me back. Thank you!" Emma Lommasson personified the notion of lifelong learning in a most singular way.

A year or so later, Emma and I had made plans to share a lunch. I remember the date—November 22, 2014—because it was the exact day when I was half her age. (I'd determined this because I thought she'd be charmed.) In a jarring coincidence, that special date happened to land on Cat-Griz game day. Well, Emma tracked down my number in her caller-ID and convinced me to meet two days early so she wouldn't miss the game! As it turned out, we dined the day after she stayed up late to 'flip the switch' for a big *Light Our Bridges Missoula* event. The 102-year-old Emma kept a busy calendar with all her Missoula- and UM-activities. And she loved every minute of it.

I like to think of Emma Lommasson as UM's longest serving ambassador. To me personally, she was certainly an exemplar of how to be a human being. Indeed, when faced with a dilemma, I have often found myself asking, "What would Emma do in this situation?" In her various formal and informal roles at our university, Ms. Lommasson served with distinction and grace for the majority of a century. And in that description, Emma is undoubtedly unique.

Therefore, it's now appropriate to bestow an honorary doctorate upon Emma Bravo Lommasson. I must say that I wish that she could be here to celebrate the occasion herself.

Submitted most respectfully,



P. Mark Kayll  
Professor of Mathematics

June 3, 2022  
64 E. Katina Ct.  
Bozeman, MT 59718

TWIMC,

I am writing this letter in support of and as a testimony to the character, leadership and humanity of my beloved boss and mentor, Mrs. Emma Lommasson. My name is Kate Delaney, and I am a "Lifetime Retiree" from UM. I began my employment in 1975 and retired in 2007. During my years of employment, I worked for UM's Registrar's Office from 1975 to 1991. Mrs. Lommasson hired me and nurtured me in the various positions I held in the Registrar's Office, first as statistician and finally as a Graduations Program Assistant. During my 16 years at the Registrar's Office, I watched Emma assist countless students, faculty and administrators navigate their various responsibilities during their time on the UM campus. She was a mentor, advisor, friend, and colleague to everyone she interacted with. Emma knew the history of UM, the UM Graduation Catalog, the UM course schedule and just about everything at UM. Emma was an accomplished scholar and graduated from UM with a bachelor's and master's degrees in Mathematics and taught Math at UM for several years.

During my years at UM, I recalled President George Dennison talk about Emma and how she assisted him during his years at UM pursuing his bachelor's degree. As I recall Emma was an academic advisor to President Dennison. He talked very warmly about Emma and his interactions with her. In the end, President Dennison was instrumental in naming one of the buildings on the UM campus in her honor. I worked at "The Lommasson Center" for many years. I also remember my own Uncle Robert Bennie and how he spoke so highly of Emma Lommasson. He was a young man returning to college after serving in the Korean War and Emma guided him during his years at UM. Emma was not only a mentor to returning veterans but to everyone who came in contact with her.

I personally remember her talking about the love she had for "young people," she surrounded herself with young people and I would think that mindset aided her in living her long, exemplary life of 107 years. Emma was "one in a million," she had something so special about her. She loved Montana and she especially loved the University of Montana. In the end, she really did dedicate her life to the people and to the institution known as the University of Montana.

It is my understanding that people on the UM campus are considering Emma for an "Honorary Doctorate Degree." This is an outstanding idea! I give my highest support and recommendation to this consideration. I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this honor. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. I am available at the contact information posted below.

Sincerely,



Kate Delaney  
406-239-1997  
Email: [kdelaney1928@gmail.com](mailto:kdelaney1928@gmail.com)

May 25, 2022

Letter in support of Honorary PhD for Emma B. Lommaeson.

It was my privilege to know Emma Lommaeson, first as an employee she hired and mentored to work in the Registrar's office in 1977. She was a life-long friend until her death in 2019.

Emma's intellect, commitment, passion and perseverance in supporting the University of Montana continued long after her 40 year career, and her connection to former students and co-workers was quite extraordinary.

Emma had time for everyone, helping, counseling, consoling, encouraging, and always listening with care and compassion. As years passed her students became professors and even university presidents. Indeed, many a discouraged student continued only because of Emma's encouragement and support. She refused to give up on even those ready to give up on themselves.

As a teacher, administrator, counselor, and Grizzly supporter she was unrivaled. As a friend I was privileged to witness her constant caring and support of others, and her love for the University to which she devoted her life.

Behind the public persona there was an even more interesting story, a continuous stream of former students, friends and well-wishers bringing flowers and gifts, a barrage of letters and phone calls from those touched by her kindness.

It was simple. Emma truly loved "those young people who kept her young," even as a

Centenarian she often noted.

We were so fortunate to have Emma's talents and her humanity for the time she had to give us.

Memorializing her name with a building and now this honorary doctoral degree is the least we can do in return.

Sincerely,  
Leigh M. Addison  
35 year retiree from  
University of Montana