



Recommendation of  
William Marcus for  
Honorary Doctorate of  
Humane Letters

2024 Fall Commencement

April 19, 2023

President Seth Bodnar  
University of Montana  
Missoula, MT 59812

Dear President Bodnar,

It is my pleasure and honor to nominate William Marcus (B.A. Journalism/Radio-Television 1974) for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana.

There is no more recognizable face or voice in Montana than William's due to his years as host of the Montana PBS program Backroads of Montana or as on-air host on Montana Public Radio. He has been a fierce advocate for public media, the humanities, the arts, the state of Montana, and the University of Montana.

His impact across the state is shown in his audio and video productions, his leadership of the UM Broadcast Media Center, his hand in the expansion of MTPR and Montana PBS across the state, his years of teaching and mentoring audio students, as well as his passion for music, literature, humanities, and more.

A native of Wibaux, William spent his entire professional career at UM serving from 1975 through 2015.

William served many roles at MTPR from production assistant, news director, development director, production director, and eventually station manager and director of the Broadcast Media Center. His audio stories, mostly of Montana musicians and artists, were broadcast nationally on NPR Morning Edition, All Things Considered, and Weekend Edition.

William served as the on-air host of the award-winning Backroads of Montana from its premiere in 1991 until he stepped aside in 2021. During those 30 years, he helped grow Backroads into a popular travelogue television series that covered stories of interesting people, incredible places, and unique events across Big Sky Country. Wherever he goes, he is recognized and thanked for his work on the program.

For years, William helped shape the next generation of audio storytellers by teaching a variety of courses through the University of Montana School of Journalism. Many of his students went on to outstanding careers at radio and television stations across Montana and the country.

William became the director of the Broadcast Media Center in 1993. He helped expand the reach of Montana Public Radio to new areas of western and central Montana. Along with Jack Hyyppa at Montana State University, William helped establish KUFM-TV and worked with KUSM-TV in Bozeman to create a singular public television presence serving the entire state.

Dozens of outstanding and award-winning television productions were produced thanks to William's leadership. In addition to Backroads of Montana, other productions include Charlie Russell's Old West, The Bicycle Corp: America's Black Army on Wheels, Glacier Park's Night of the Grizzlies, Evelyn Cameron: Pictures from a Worthy Life, Playing for the World: The 1904 Fort Shaw Indian Girls Basketball Team, and more. These productions have won multiple statewide, regional, and national awards.

William served on statewide boards including the Friends of Montana PBS and Humanities Montana. He received the Montana Governor's Humanities Award in 2007 and the Cultural Achievement Award from the Missoula Cultural Council in 2015.

In addition to his many nominations and awards for audio and video productions, William received the J.B. Speer Award for Distinguished Administrative Service at UM. He was named a Distinguished Alumni Award from UM in 2018. He has been a part of UM Homecoming for years as interviewer of the Distinguished Alums. Also, I always loved that William volunteered on campus to serve meals during the annual faculty and staff picnic or to help new first-year students move into their dorm rooms.

William continues to be on-air for Morning Classics and during pledge weeks on MTPR. He gives feedback to video producers on their productions. And he was a valuable voice to me when I took over as BMC director from him in 2016.

William Marcus has meant so much to the University of Montana, the state of Montana, and to scores of students and employees. He is a perfect candidate for an honorary doctorate from UM.

Sincerely,

Ray Ekness

Former director, UM Broadcast Media Center

Former chair, UM Radio-Television Department

Former professor, UM School of Journalism



June 28, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to write this letter in support of William Marcus' nomination for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana.

For decades, William has played a crucial role in developing and expanding public media access to Montanans through his work with both Montana Public Radio and Montana Public Television as Director of the Broadcast Media Center. He worked tirelessly to ensure that Montana voices and perspectives were shared within our state and with the broader public across the country and the world. During his tenure, the networks of MTPR and MT PBS expended their coverage areas to bring a high-quality public service of news, music, cultural programs, children's programs and more to increasing numbers of citizens in our state.

In addition to this work, William has served as a mentor for hundreds of students and professional employees that he worked with. His professionalism, high level broadcast skills as both radio and television host and producer, creative vision for the mission and work of public broadcasting, and ability to establish workflows to turn ideas into reality are nothing short of impressive. His passion for this work continues today as he champions public media even as a retiree.

On a personal note, William has been a strong supporter of my career growth from entry level fundraiser for Montana Public Radio to now serving as Interim Director for the Broadcast Media Center. Several years ago, I reached out to William and asked if I could talk with him about what this role entails and how to best prepare myself for this personal career goal of mine. He was and continues to be unbelievably supportive and helpful as a mentor, sharing his experience and asking me thought provoking questions for me to consider. I know that I can always count on William for level-headed, thoughtful, and helpful guidance. There is an extensive list of folks working at both public and commercial radio and television stations that count William as a mentor and champion of their work. I know he enjoys keeping up with their careers and work.

I wholeheartedly support William being recognized with an honorary doctorate as he is one of UM's most impressive alums and former employees.

Sincerely,

Anne Hosler

Interim Director | Broadcast Media Center | 406.243.4214 | [anne.hosler@umontana.edu](mailto:anne.hosler@umontana.edu)

**Broadcast Media Center**

July 9, 2024

Dear President Bodnar,

I am delighted to write in support of William Marcus' nomination to receive a University of Montana honorary doctorate. I have known William for most of my 30-year public TV career and I consider him a mentor, scholar, storyteller and quintessential Montanan.

In the mid-90s, as the young program director for KUSM-TV in Bozeman, I scheduled the very first episodes of William's new series, the *Backroads of Montana*. I did not realize how this humble show would play such an important role in the growth of Montana PBS into a statewide public television service. Of course, as successful as *Backroads* has been, the growth of Montana PBS was due to more than just one program.

William Marcus served as the Director of the Broadcast Media Center at a critical moment in the mid-90s. With a well-established public radio station at UM, a second public TV station in Missoula seemed inevitable. Yet, in the face of a federal funding crisis for public media, concerns from PBS about duplicative services, and limited state resources, the MUS decided to partner with the established public TV station in Bozeman, and William provided essential leadership for the success that followed.

William believed that the UM Broadcast Media Center and KUFM-TV could play a vital role producing local MT-Made programs of the highest quality that would entertain, inform and educate Montanans. Over the next twenty years he assembled and led a team of talented producers that would go on to produce award-winning historical and cultural documentaries that have raised the profile of Montana PBS in the state, and across the nation.

William's legacy with Montana PBS included an early commitment to public service programming, specifically, investigating reporting. William admired the documentary journalism coming from PBS's FRONTLINE series, and believed that Montana audiences deserved local, in-depth investigative reporting and storytelling of that caliber. William created a new position at KUFM-TV, hired a skilled journalist, and personally served as executive producer on many investigative films breaking news stories and addressing difficult issues.

Programs like *Whose Watching the Kids*, which exposed abuse and neglect in private schools for troubled youth in Montana; *Power Brokers*, about the demise of Montana Power and the deregulation movement; and *Clearing the Smoke: The Science of Cannabis*, a 2011 program which revealed the action of the plant's chemical compounds on the brain. Thanks to William's vision, Montana PBS continues to produce award-winning investigative programs that expose issues overlooked in the headlines.

William possesses a deep respect and admiration for the people, history and landscape of Montana, revealed in the countless documentaries for which he has raised private funding, provided expert editorial guidance, and broadcast to viewers in MT, on national PBS and to international audiences. As an executive producer, William has always been interested in remarkable Montana characters, like the photographer profiled in *Evelyn Cameron: Pictures From a Worthy Life*; a powerful biography of Montana's favorite cowboy artist in, *Charlie Russell's Old West*; and an insightful look back in time to Montana's 1972 Constitutional Convention in, *For This and Future Generations*.

It is not just the major moments and characters in MT history that have drawn William's attention. A Wibaux, MT native, William has been eager to share the everyday stories of people in small communities, who are understandably delighted to see the *Backroads* production crew headed into their town.

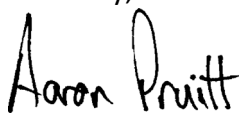
In 2007 William was awarded the Governor's Humanities Award, in recognition of his remarkable contributions through public TV and radio, to tell the stories, big and small, of Montana's people.

Today at Montana PBS, we often brag about the collaboration of our MSU and UM staff, working together "364 days" a year, to bring our citizens one of the best public television services in the nation. But the strength of that partnership, beginning in 1997, was aspirational, and certainly not guaranteed. William's legacy, as one of the architects and founders of our vibrant statewide public TV service, is still enriching the lives of Montanans every day. His leadership and personal example of shared governance in areas of fundraising, local production and technology investment, helped build a trust relationship between our stations, and our universities, that is as strong as ever.

In retirement, William remains one of Montana PBS's most recognizable on-air personalities, since our viewers still travel alongside him on the more than 50 *Backroads* programs we continue to broadcast. Little do those viewers know of William's even greater impact, behind the camera, as a pivotal public media leader in Montana.

I enthusiastically support William Marcus' nomination for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana.

Sincerely,



Aaron Pruitt

Director and General Manager  
Montana PBS



July 10, 2024

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter to urge the University of Montana to bestow an honorary doctorate of letters upon William Marcus.

When I arrived at UM in the fall of 1982, I was fortunate to have William as an instructor. Like him, I was a young man from a small town in Montana with big dreams in the world of broadcasting. In him, I saw what was possible.

William was a constant presence in my training and took what I thought was a special interest in making sure I was prepared to succeed after graduation.

When I got my first job 'back east' in 1987, William wished me well and handed me a red Ralph Lauren 'power tie.'

I still have that tie

I know of William's many years of service to Montana Public Radio. I know of his years hosting "Backroads," as well as all the time his steady hand helped guide the Broadcast Media Center. And I know that I am one of thousands of students to whom William gave advice, instruction, and direction.

To me, William is the very finest example of what Montana, as well as the University of Montana, produces in a human being. And I wholeheartedly lend my enthusiastic voice to this campaign to honor him with a doctorate.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Bishop".

Shane Bishop  
National Broadcast Producer  
Dateline  
100 Universal City Plaza  
Universal City, CA 91608  
917-841-8893  
Shane.bishop@nbcuni.com



Eric Hyypa  
President  
National Educational Telecommunications Association  
939 South Stadium Drive  
Columbia, SC 29201  
[ehyypa@netaonline.org](mailto:ehyypa@netaonline.org)

Seth Bodnar  
President  
University of Montana  
University Hall 109  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula, MT 59812

President Bodnar:

I am writing in full support of the nomination of William Marcus for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana. William's contributions to the university, the Montana University System, to public media, and to his fellow Montanans are many and substantial. I cannot imagine a more worthy candidate for this honor.

I had the distinct pleasure of working alongside William for many years as his partner and collaborator in directing and growing Montana PBS. During my tenure as Director and General Manager of the "Montana State half" of this successful and impactful partnership, William was a mentor, a collaborator, and a friend.

His contributions to the cultural, journalistic, and artistic communities of Montana through his long career were substantial, and I'm sure have been chronicled well by others. For my part, what stands out about William's service was his dedication to the University, to the Missoula Community, and to Montana. He always presented each in the best possible light, celebrating the rich contributions each made to the lives of Montanans.

Given the healthy rivalry between our two parent institutions and the many differences between our two communities and campuses, a successful partnership to build a robust and impactful public media partnership for Montana was only possible because of the vision, integrity and ingenuity of William Marcus. William's values and honesty forged the relationship that serves us all today.

I am confident that William is highly deserving of this honor, and I urge the university to consider this nomination favorably. Please feel free to contact me at 803-806-9629 or [ehyypa@netaonline.org](mailto:ehyypa@netaonline.org) should you require any further information regarding this nomination.

Thank you for considering this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Hyypa".

Eric Hyypa  
President  
National Educational Telecommunications Association





GREATER  
MONTANA  
FOUNDATION

2076 Scott Drive | Helena, Montana 59601 | (406) 698-8623 | info@greatermontana.org

Mr. Ray Ekness  
UM Broadcast Media Center  
University of Montana  
32 Campus Drive  
Missoula, Montana 59812

July 18, 2024

Dear Mr. Ekness:

I write in support of the proposal to award William Marcus an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Montana.

I have known William for many years. I was a newspaper publisher in Montana and founding executive director of Leadership Montana. I served as Director of the Montana Historical Society from 2011-2020, from which I retired. I now serve as Executive Director of the Greater Montana Foundation. In addition, I was honored to serve two full terms on the board of the Friends of Montana PBS.

I had the opportunity to work with and get to know William in each of those capacities and can think of no one more deserving of this honor. As host of "Backroads of Montana," and his many other roles with Montana Public Radio and Montana PBS, William found the "hidden gem" stories across our state and told them with a captivating, thoughtful and engaging style. Through "Backroads," MTPR, and Montana PBS, the real Montana way of life was delivered to living rooms across the nation.

More specifically, through my role at the Montana Historical Society, I worked with William and the production team on the major documentary film, "C.M. Russell and the America West." We made the Russell collection of the MHS available for the production and were incredibly proud of that involvement and the international viewership of the film.

William Marcus is a Montana Treasure and a wonder representative of the University of Montana and our state. He deserves the highest honor the university can bestow.

Sincerely,

Bruce Whittenberg  
Executive Director

June 29 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to express my support for William Marcus to be selected for an honorary doctorate from the University of Montana.

During my time as a student at the University of Montana, I knew William as both a professional and personal example to all of us in the program. Willam set the highest bar of excellence on radio and television, both on and off the air. He worked tirelessly for the betterment of public broadcasting, the University of Montana students and the State of Montana. He also knew his stuff and was happy to share his knowledge.

I had the privilege to serve with William on the KBGA radio board, first as a DJ representative and later as KBGA's program director. Willam's professionalism and knowledge were invaluable on the board. William was a scholarly example for us all.

When I think of someone that would deserve the recognition of an honorary doctorate from the University Of Montana, William is the person that comes to mind. Being the person he is and through the difference he has made, William makes me proud to be a Griz.

Sincerely,  
Carey Eyer  
Class 2000

William W. Marcus  
P.O. Box 7054  
Missoula, MT 59807  
406.544.8618; [william.marcus@umontana.edu](mailto:william.marcus@umontana.edu)

**Current:** Executive Producer and Producer for MontanaPBS productions

### **Professional Preparation**

BA Journalism/ Radio-TV, University of Montana, 1974

### **Appointments**

Director, Broadcast Media Center, University of Montana, Retired, 1995-2015

Acting Director, Broadcast Media Center, University of Montana, 1993-1995

Production Director, Montana Public Radio, 1982-1993

Development Director, Montana Public Radio, 1976-1982

Production Assistant, Montana Public Radio, 1975-1976

### **Selected Production Projects**

**Executive Producer:** *C.M Russell and the American West*, a three-hour documentary about Montana cowboy artist Charles M. Russell. Premiered November, 2017, on MontanaPBS. C.M. Russell Museum's Heritage Award for Storytelling, March, 2018.

**Host/Producer:** *Backroads of Montana*, Public television series featuring Montana citizens and locales. 1991-present. Winner of five Montana Broadcasters Association Non-Commercial Television Program of the Year awards.

**Executive Producer:** *Three Miles an Hour*, follows seasoned back-country guide Smoke Elser during one of his final trips into the Bob Marshall Wilderness of Montana. (2011)

**Executive Producer:** *Glacier Park's Night of the Grizzlies*, documenting two fatal grizzly bear attacks in Glacier National Park in August, 1967. The highest-rated MontanaPBS production. (2010)

**Executive Producer:** *Playing for the World: 1904 Fort Shaw Indian Girls' Basketball Team*, follows the team from Montana Indian boarding schools to success at the 1904 St. Louis Worlds Fair. (2009)

**Executive Producer:** *Evelyn Cameron: Pictures from a Worthy Life*, HD television documentary about late 19<sup>th</sup> century photographer in eastern Montana. Regional Emmy Award for best cultural/historical documentary, NW Chapter National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS), 2006; Cine Golden Eagle Award, 2006.

**Executive Producer:** *For This and Future Generations: Montana's 1972 Constitutional Convention*, television documentary on the 1972 convention that rewrote Montana's constitution. Regional Emmy Award for best cultural/historical documentary, NW Chapter NATAS, 2003

### **Honors / Awards**

J.B. Speer Award for Distinguished Administrative Service, 2015  
Cultural Achievement Award, Missoula Cultural Council, 2015  
Montana Governor's Humanities Award, 2007

### **Activities**

*Humanities Montana* – Board member 2007-2013, Chair 2011-2012. Statewide board governing activities of state humanities council.

*Friends of MontanaPBS*, board member. Fundraising and advisory board for MontanaPBS. Designated member as General Manager of KUFM-TV.

MontanaPBS productions made possible by  
William Marcus as Executive Producer



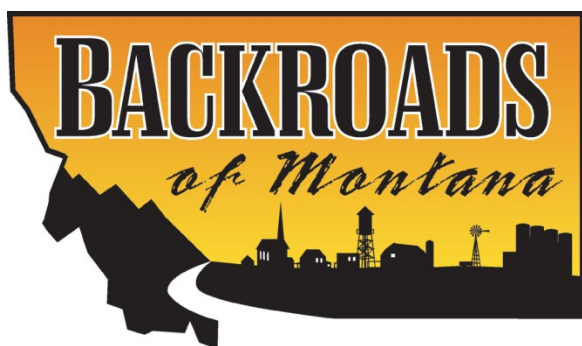
## 3 Miles an Hour

It is the speed of a horse and some folks say the best way to see and savor a life well lived. This is the story of retired back-country outfitter Smoke Elser. His vision of wilderness has always included people.



## 4-H: Six Montana Stories

Follow six young Montanans as they learn that 4-H is about having fun--but being responsible about it. It's about knowing where you're headed but never forgetting where you've been.



## Backroads of Montana

Since 1991, the Backroads crew has traveled across Montana visiting its unique people and places.



## **Bicycle Corps: America's Black Army On Wheels**

The story of the 25th Infantry's bicycle trip from Missoula to St. Louis.



## **Billing Montanans: 2 Family Tax Stories**

This program follows Montana families and their property tax and state income tax dollars.



## **Brought To You By ALEC**

Few Americans know anything about the American Legislative Exchange Council.



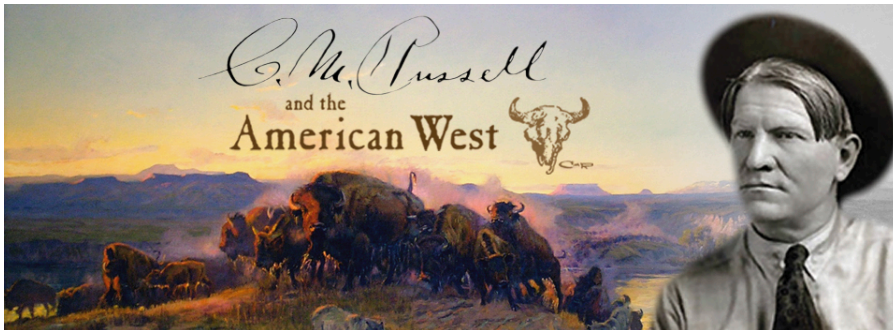


## Building Bridges

"Building Bridges" chronicles 10-weeks in the lives of 12 protestant and catholic students from Ireland and Northern Ireland as they come to Montana to work on Habitat for Humanity projects.

## Building Bridges: Back to Ireland

In 1997, 12 young men and women from Ireland and Northern Ireland came to western Montana to work on Habitat for Humanity projects while learning how to deal with their cultural, political and religious differences. In 2010, MontanaPBS traveled to Ireland to tell the stories of five of the original 12 workers and how their lives have changed since their great adventure in Montana.



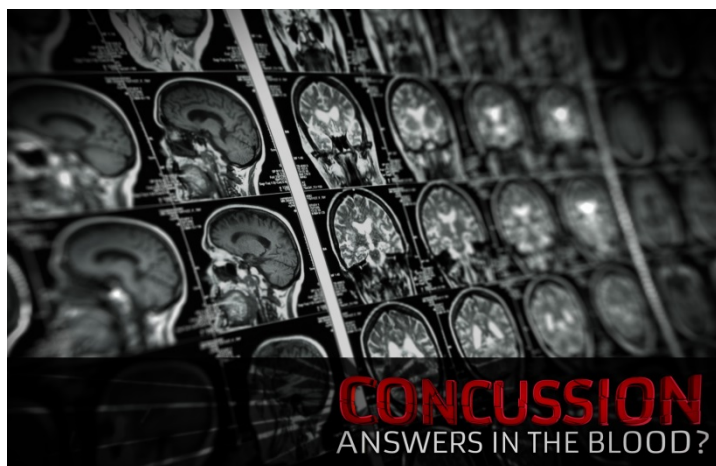
## C.M. Russell and The American West

The documentary examines Russell's arrival in Montana as a youth, his apprenticeship and work as a cowboy on the open Range, and his self-taught, almost explosive growth into an iconic American artist who affected generations.



## Clearing The Smoke: The Science Of Cannabis

Montana's Medical Marijuana law has been the subject of intense controversy and criticism



## Concussion: Answers in the Blood?

In the sports world, while concussion awareness is on the rise and current diagnostic protocols are improving, concussion diagnosis still relies heavily on symptoms and self-reporting by athletes. Now, a team of scientists at the University of Montana is attempting to develop a blood test to provide a definitive diagnosis for concussions.



## Dark Energy: The Clean Coal Controversy

Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer is a proponent of refining the state's coal reserves.



## Disclosure

Lobbyists play a vital role in Montana state government, offering a wealth of knowledge and assisting lawmakers in making informed decisions on complex issues. But how much influence do lobbyists and their employers exert on the legislature? How much does the public know about the money spent in an attempt to sway lawmakers and other state leaders? How much of that spending is being reported? In this half-hour documentary, MontanaPBS explores the state laws that govern lobbyist disclosure - laws that some critics say, are overdue for an overhaul.





## **Evelyn Cameron: Pictures From A Worthy Life**

Evelyn Cameron left a life in England and found a sense of peace on the Montana prairie.



## **For This And Future Generations: Montana's 1972 Constitutional Convention**

In 1972, 100 grassroots delegates gather to re-write the state constitution.



## **Glacier Park's Night Of The Grizzlies**

On August 12, 1967, grizzly bears in Glacier NP killed two young women and mauled a man.

## **2001 Governor's Arts Awards**

Join MontanaPBS for profiles of the 2001 Governor's Arts Awards: Ralph & Myrna Paulus of Choteau, Eric Funk of Bozeman, Don Carey of Missoula, James Lee Burke of Missoula, Joanna Barker of Corvallis, Robert Morgan of Helena and Agnes "Oshanee" Kenmille of Pablo.

## **2003 Governor's Awards For The Arts**

This year's awards were given to five recipients, each profiled here: Uri Barnea, music director and conductor of the Billings Symphony Orchestra; the Custer County Art and Heritage Center in Miles City; Judy Ericksen, artist and community activist in Great Falls; Bill Stockton, artist and visionary from Grass Range; and former Great Falls and Bozeman resident Larry D. Williams, an arts administrator and music educator.

## **2005 Governor's Awards For The Arts**

Meet the 2005 Governor's Award for the Arts recipients Ernie Pepion of Browning, Becky Eiker of Helena, Paul Zarzyski of Great Falls and Hawthorne School in Bozeman.

## **2008 Governor's Awards For The Arts**

The 2008 Governor's Awards for the Arts highlights the achievements of four distinguished honorees. Corwin "Corky" Clairmont is recognized for his achievement in the visual arts, Terry Conrad for media arts and service to the arts, Ed Lahey for his contributions in literature, and musician Allen Vizzutti as a Montana-raised artist working out of state. The Governor's Award for the Arts is a celebration of these outstanding individuals and their contributions.

## **Growing Up In Japan**

Ten Montana middle-school students learn about growing up in Japan. They give a kids perspective on their exchange trip. The previous year the Japanese students came to Montana. Now it's the Montana students turn to visit. They find out if it's really the same growing up anywhere in the world.

## **Hands On History**

Ten Montana middle-school students spend a week in Virginia City learning fun, hands-on activities that make history come alive. The students find new ways to learn about historical architecture, restoration and much more. Other kids can duplicate their activities in their own hometowns.



## Hidden Fire: The Great Butte Explosion

On a winter's night in 1895 Butte's first company of professional firefighters go to work.

## In His Own Words: Walter's Great Falls

Walter Breuning (Sept. 21, 1896 April 14, 2011) was an American super centenarian. This film chronicles his early life in Great Falls, Montana.



## Joseph Kinsey Howard: A Life Outside The Margin

Joe Howard worked to draw attention to the political and economic struggles of the state

## Making A Difference: From Citizen To Citizen Lawmaker

They decide how much you'll pay in taxes, what constitutes a crime in Montana and what type of education your child will get...and they do it all in 90 days. They're citizen lawmakers, striving to make a difference. MontanaPBS' Anna Rau follows two freshman legislators to the capitol, Republican Harry Klock and Democrat Kevin Furey, as they struggle with six-day work weeks, a mountain of reading and hundreds of complicated bills. What will they accomplish their freshman session, and how will their decisions affect all Montanans?

## Making Frontier House

Experts in all areas of frontier living brought a wealth of expertise to bear on the Frontier House project, and MontanaPBS was on hand to document their suggestions, interactions, and just plain hard work.



## Playing For The World: 1904 Fort Shaw Indian Girls' Basketball Team

Girls' basketball has a long history in Montana, dating back to the earliest organized game played at an Indian boarding school at Fort Shaw in 1897.



## Power Brokers

It's arguably one of Montana's most tragic stories. It led to the demise of Montana Power, the state's only Fortune 500 Company, and it pushed power prices into the stratosphere. While most know how the experiment in Electricity Deregulation ended, few know how it all began. In this hour-long documentary, Montana PBS investigates the sources of the deregulation movement and the subsequent power crisis. The documentary uncovers surprising relationships and business connections that would eventually cast a shadow over former Governor Marc Racicot and draw Montana Power into a federal investigation.

## Really, Really Big Floods

Montana students learn about the history of the Ice Age floods that shaped parts of the Pacific Northwest; aerial photography and animations help us visualize these enormous floods. The students examine clues, question geologists and conduct their own experiments--and learn about the scientific controversy the floods investigation has engendered.



## Remembering The Columbia Gardens

This program celebrates the now-vanished Columbia Gardens, in business from 1899-1973, in home movies, pictures, and first-hand accounts of people who enjoyed the rollercoaster, the carousel, the biplanes, the cowboy swings.

## A Step Forward

"A Step Forward" features a 'special' dance class taught to twenty Missoula students exhibiting a wide variety of disabilities. Despite their physical and mental restrictions, the students are surprisingly at ease with themselves as dancers. The class ends with a final performance at a local theatre before an audience of friends and family.



## Sun River Homestead

This documentary tells the story of Esther Strasburger and her two sisters, Lydia and Anna, homesteaders in the Sun River Valley near Simms, Mont., in the early 1900s. The program also explores how homesteading was marketed to prospective settlers, often with direct appeals to women.

## Voices Carry: Missoula's International Choral Festival

This cheering production documents Missoula's 2003 International Choral Festival. Sixteen choirs from all over the world, more children's choirs than ever before, and over 50 free concerts made for a week of fun, fellowship and global harmony.

## Who's Watching The Kids?

There are more than 30 privately run schools for troubled youth operating around the state





## Yellowstone in Four Seasons

Yellowstone National Park has 4 seasons that can change at any time. Summer is for eating.... Fall is for mating... Winter is for surviving ....and Spring is for re- birth.

(Does not include numerous political candidate debates, election coverage and election analysis programs.)

# On-air honor: KUFM's William Marcus recognized for years of service

- By BETSY COHEN of the Missoulian
- Feb 26, 2007



On-air honor: KUFM's William Marcus recognized for years of service

When William Marcus packed his bags and left his remote hometown of Wibaux for college at the University of Montana, he didn't really have a plan.

It was the early 1970s and all Marcus really knew was he wanted to know more.

At UM, his simple - albeit heady - quest took him on an unexpected journey that led him to the School of Journalism, where he received a bachelor's degree in the radio-television program. As a student, he landed a part-time job at the fledgling campus radio station, KUFM, and found his life's work.

As if someone was building a sidewalk ahead of him, Marcus said recently, his path was found at UM.

He didn't know at the time that he would stick around 31 years, and along the way help build KUFM into a powerhouse station, that he would help secure its affiliation with National Public Radio or serve as a host and interviewer for Missoula-produced national programming.

But he stayed his course, one he found intellectually stimulating and filled with stories about the state he loves to call home. His work eventually expanded, and while raising the profile of - and the funds for - the radio station, Marcus also helped build a telecommunications center at UM. These days, his official title is director of UM's Broadcast Media Center, which includes public

television programming and is home to the award-winning show he hosts called "Backroads of Montana."

On Thursday, Marcus' journey and his work will be publicly honored in Helena when he is bestowed the 2007 Governor's Humanities Award from the Montana Committee for the Humanities.

"William has distinguished himself in a variety of media, both in Montana Public Radio and Montana public television and broadcasting," said Mark Sherouse, executive director of the Montana Committee for the Humanities.

"In all his work he has always brought Montana's humanities and literature and culture to the forefront, and because of his work, he has brought to all of us a greater understanding of ourselves and the state."

When two librarians - independent from each other - nominated Marcus for the recognition, the award committee let out a collective "yes, of course," Sherouse said.

"William is a natural for this award," he said, "and we are honored to give it to him."

The award, which is given every two years, honors individuals who have made outstanding achievements in humanities scholarship and service, and whose work has enhanced public understanding and appreciation of the humanities.

Marcus is one of five Montana residents who will receive the award at ceremony led by Gov. Brian Schweitzer and celebrated at an evening banquet. The other honorees are Rose Marie Goetz Aus of Glendive; Marvin Granger of Billings; Eve Palmer Malo of Dillon and Johnnie Lockett Thomas of Miles City.

"I am very honored by this," Marcus said, "but I also know that the recognition comes as part of all the work of the people at Montana Public Radio and MontanaPBS.

"This is not my accomplishment alone."

Among a long list of people who share the success of the UM-based programming, Marcus said, are Ray Ekness, Gus Chambers, John Twiggs, all of whom make the "Backroads" television show possible and Michael Marsolek, who directs programming for Montana Public Radio.

"I know this award is for the work of everyone," Marcus said, "and I plan to accept this honor in their names as much as mine."



# Monday's Montanan: William Marcus reflects on 40 years in public media

From the [Monday's Montanan](#) series

- DAVID ERICKSON david.erickson@missoulian.com
- Jul 20, 2015



“I was basically in the right place at the right time,” says William Marcus, reflecting on his 40-year career in public media in Missoula. “It’s been very much the story of my career. Like someone built a sidewalk in front of me.” [KURT WILSON, Missoulian](#)

William Marcus came to Missoula from eastern Montana in the early 1970s with no intention of pursuing a career in broadcast journalism, but after retiring this month following four decades in the field, most recently as the director of the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center and Montana Public Radio/Montana PBS, he can look back at a simple twist of fate that led to his life’s calling.

He was originally going to study psychology, but he strongly desired to use the School of Journalism’s darkroom to pursue his side hobby of photography.

“It was the best darkroom at that time,” he recalled. “But they had a stipulation that you had to be signed up as a major to use it. So I did.”

After he was accepted into the Radio-Television department, Marcus worked as a student part-time at the fledgling campus radio station.

February 8, 2018

Dear Selectors for recipient of The University of Montana Distinguished Alumni Award:

William Marcus fits the description of the old accolade "a gentlemen and a scholar" more perfectly than anyone I have known in my long life of knowing people. He would be a superb choice to receive The University of Montana Distinguished Alumni Award.

His earnest, warm and sometimes wry wisdom is plain to see by a generation of viewers in his role as narrator of "Backroads of Montana". William is a Montana tradition and a Montana treasure. Those of us who have had the good fortune to personally know William, both deeply respect and revere him. I've known lots of Bills, and some pretty good ones, but William is no Bill. William naturally fits William. He is a great and good man.

In addition to my personal support for William, I've attached a newspaper column I dedicated to him in 2015 on the occasion of his semiretirement. It more specifically describes his achievements and contributions which greatly qualify him for our Distinguished Alumni Award.

Bob Brown, M.Ed, 1987  
UM Alumni Association life member

# William Marcus: Montana bids farewell to broadcast giant

- By BOB BROWN
- Jun 15, 2015



William Marcus is shown here in the KUFM studios in 2007 on the occasion of his being awarded the Governor's Humanities Award.

William Marcus is the quiet giant of Montana media, and it is ironic that he will begin his long planned retirement this month, within two weeks of the surprising and greatly unfortunate departures of two other Montana luminaries in the profession of journalism, veteran state capital reporters Chuck Johnson and Mike Dennison.

When the career of Marcus began 40 years ago, public television didn't exist in Montana. Soon after he took the reins at the University of Montana Broadcast Media Center 20 years ago, public television was well on the way to becoming a statewide reality.



University of Montana and Montana State University public television productions can now be picked up by Montana viewers in over 400 communities in every corner of our state. Marcus was instrumental in the collaboration between the two universities that made this happen.

With roots in the small eastern Montana town of Wibaux, Marcus grew up on the backroads of rural Montana. After obtaining a degree in radio–television journalism at UM in 1974, he began as a production assistant on the campus radio station when it couldn't be heard beyond the city limits of Missoula.

As he rose in the management of the station so did its reach, until today KUFM Montana Public Radio has transmitter-linked affiliates available to listeners making up more than half of Montana's population.

Marcus' accomplishments in pioneering public broadcasting in our state are great and of enormous significance to Montanans. He is probably best known, however, for his role as host of the Montana PBS series "Backroads of Montana," in which he spotlights rural Montana communities, and the delightful Montana personalities who live in them.

Montanans get to see their fellow residents in an authentic and unrefined state. Marcus has filmed over 40 "Backroads" episodes, and his loyal viewers will be relieved to know, that though in retirement, he still plans to do at least a few more.

Perhaps most significantly, Marcus has been the executive producer for four regional Emmy Award-winning television documentaries. Though he insists that others deserve the credit more than he, each is truly a Montana masterpiece. They include "Sun River Homestead;" "Evelyn Cameron: Pioneer Woman Photographer;" "Bicycle Corps," the saga of the amazing cross-country bicycle trek of the all-black 25th infantry from Fort Missoula to St. Louis; and "For this and Future Generations," which is the epic story of Montana's 1972 Constitutional Convention.

Though it didn't earn a well-deserved Emmy, "Night of the Grizzlies," the chilling documentary on the fatal Glacier National Park bear attacks, has had more viewers than any other production in the history of Montana Public Television.

In the Montana pantheon, low-profile William Marcus stands high as one of our state's most remarkable achievers. To paraphrase the poet, his quiet departure from Montana media leadership will leave a great and empty place against the Montana Big Sky.

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*Bob Brown is a former Montana secretary of state and state Senate president.*