

BARB SKELTON AND PAUL GATZEMEIER NAMED HONORARY CHAIRS FOR BLACK TIE BLUE JEANS SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER 2008

For more information: Shari VanDelinder, Rocky Mountain College director of development, 657-1173

BILLINGS –The word ubiquitous – ever present, everywhere -- best describes the benevolent contribution and involvement in the life of Rocky Mountain College of Barb Skelton and Paul Gatzemeier, this year's Black Tie Blue Jeans Scholarship Benefit Honorary Chairs.

“There is very little at Rocky that Barb and Paul have not been a part of,” said Shari VanDelinder, RMC director of development. “They have created scholarships, hosted donor events, contributed to the annual fund, and donated auction items for fundraisers. They have been great stewards of the equestrian program, have helped with the international program, and were among the first to join the Rocky 500 Club.”

Barb has served on the RMC National Advisory Council and the RMC Board of Trustees since 1999. She has been a member of the RMC Executive Board since 2003.

“My devotion to Rocky comes from my seeing the huge difference the College has made in everybody's life,” Barb said. “Paul and I see something good going on at Rocky every day.”

Barb's first experience with RMC was when her daughter, Abbie, decided to attend after being recruited by several other colleges.

“She had scholarship offers at several colleges, but when we visited Rocky, Arthur DeRosier (RMC's seventh president, who died this past year), Brad Nason (RMC's academic vice president) and Obert Udem (RMC's director of major gifts) visited with her and personally recruited her and offered her a scholarship,” Barb said. “It was the close interest and personal touch we were looking for.”

Barb and Paul decided to relocate to Billings, in 1999, and bought the Intermountain Equestrian Center, agreeing to lease the facilities to RMC to support its equestrian program.

“The more I learned about Rocky while Abbie was attending, the more I appreciated that this was a tremendous college,” she said. “I wanted to be part of it.”

The involvement of Barb and Paul with RMC is a great pleasure for RMC President Michael Mace.

“They are great friends, great supporters of the College, and an example of commitment to the welfare and future of Rocky,” he said. “Whenever something comes across my desk showing who has contributed, whether it's from buying a Rocky license plate or donating to help the RMC Choir travel to Bulgaria, their names are on the list.”

A fifth generation Montanan, Barb's record of community service is admirable and crosses political party lines. She was Judith Basin County's first woman county commissioner. She was the first Democratic Party woman nominee for lieutenant

governor, running with two-term governor, Tom Judge. She served as treasurer for U.S. Senator Max Baucus. For her work on the Selective Service Board, she received an award from President Ronald Reagan for Outstanding Public Service. For her work with the White House Conference on Small Business, she received an outstanding contributor award from President Bill Clinton. She served on the Montana Banking Commission, appointed by Gov. Marc Racicot and later, by Gov. Judy Martz. She currently serves on the Montana Highway Commission, appointed by Gov. Brian Schweitzer.

A devoted rancher and horsewoman, Barb has owned world-class champion quarter horses. Barb and Paul raise registered Angus cattle at the Hardenbrook Ranch, in her family since 1887. She serves on the American Quarter Horse Association (AQHA) Leadership Society as well as the AQHA Scholarship Committee. She is also president of the Coal Black Cattle Co. & Consulting.

Paul is a senior executive in the energy industry with 35 years experience in creating and leading environmentally sound energy production companies. He is currently senior managing director of Bicent Power, LLC, a New York private independent power and infrastructure company with expertise in development, acquisition and long-term operation of power generation and infrastructure projects.

Born and raised in north central Montana, he remains involved in the family farming operations his grandfather homesteaded, and in the cattle and equestrian business. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from Montana State University and has completed the executive management programs at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the Harvard Business School.

Paul has also served on numerous industry, business and civic boards, including Montana Chamber of Commerce; the Montana Chamber Foundation; Montana Coal Council; National Coal Council; Montana Special Olympics; and the Rimrock Foundation. He was chair of the Montana Chamber of Commerce in 1999, and president of the Montana Coal Council from 1989-1994.

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