

LONGTIME BILLINGS ARCHITECT HONORED AT RMC

WAYNE GUSTAFSON HAS LONG AFFILIATION WITH COLLEGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS – A longtime Billings architect, who served as a member of the Rocky Mountain College Board of Trustees and has been a loyal friend of the College, will be honored for his service Thursday, June 25, at 3 p.m., outside Technology Hall.

The public is welcome to attend the event.

Wayne Gustafson, who designed many notable buildings in Billings, as well as many buildings and restorations on the RMC campus, has a history with the RMC campus dating to the 1930s. His father was a professor and the family lived in faculty housing located where Fortin Education Center is today.

“Wayne has helped Rocky for decades and still provides valuable service for which we want to show our appreciation,” said RMC President Michael Mace.

A rough cut stone – similar to those quarried for many of RMC’s buildings from the nearby rim rock cliffs -- with a commemorative plaque will be placed outside Technology Hall.

Gustafson’s signature designs can be seen in schools and churches across the state. Among buildings in Montana, he designed West High, the Billings Gazette, Security Federal Savings and the MSU-B student union building.

On the RMC campus he worked on the renovation of the Bair Family Student Center and the Paul M. Adams Memorial Library and Education Resource Center. He continues to provide designs for possible renovations for the RMC Aviation Hall.

In 1920, Gustafson’s parents moved west to Montana and settled on a homestead north of Chinook. Gustafson was born there in 1927, the third son of a family of four boys. When hard times hit, the family moved to Billings in 1931 and then Hardin in 1934, where he graduated from high school in 1945.

He enlisted in the Navy in March 1945, when he was 17-years-old, and was assigned to duty in the South Pacific where he served aboard an amphibious ship used for landing troops during invasions. After WWII ended, he was honorably discharged in 1946.

He studied architecture at MSU-Bozeman, graduating in 1950. In 1955, he and Vernon Drake founded Drake-Gustafson Architects.

Gov. Ted Schwinden appointed Gustafson to the Montana Board of Architects in 1987. He was then elected president of the board and was a delegate to the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards. In 1998, Tau Sigma Delta Honorary Society in Architecture presented him with its prestigious Silver Medal for a record of distinction in the field of architecture.

Besides serving as a trustee on the RMC Board of Directors, he served on the board of First Interstate Bank and was president of the board of the Billings Chamber of Commerce. He is presently president of the board of Western Heritage Center.

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