

## HARRIS, BALLARD, LARSON SERVING ON RMC BOARD

For more information: Dan Burkhart, Rocky Mountain College director of news and information, 406-657-1104 or [burkhard@rocky.edu](mailto:burkhard@rocky.edu)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS –Linda Harris, a woman with a record of dedicated service to her community and state, was elected to the Rocky Mountain College Board of Trustees in September, according to RMC Board Chair Barbara Skelton.

Dr. William W. Ballard and F.H. (Rick) Larson, who have served previously on the RMC Board, were also elected to serve on the Board, Skelton added.

“We’re very proud to welcome a new member with a wonderful background of service to her profession and her community,” Skelton said. “And, we’re pleased to have two longtime friends of the College who also have a record of outstanding community service return to the Board.”

Harris has served on the Board for the Memorial Hospital Association (dba Beartooth Hospital and Health Center) in Red Lodge, Mont. since 2000. She was Board President from 2005-2008. Under her leadership, this Critical Access Hospital completed a joint venture partnership with Billings Clinic, a major tertiary care center in Montana, and began the process of replacing the aging Critical Access Hospital facility. That facility is opening this November. Harris was involved in all aspects of this project, including the capital campaign. Harris was awarded the Volunteer of the Year for 2007 by Beartooth Hospital and Health Center as well as the Regional Trustee of the Year for 2007 by the Billings Clinic. In 2008 she received the Montana Hospital Association Trustee of the Year award.

Harris is a member of the American Society of Women Accountants, serving on numerous committees for the local chapter as well as being a past president. She was awarded the Billings Chapter Woman of Year in 2004. In 2009 she began a 2- year term on the national Board of the American Society of Women Accountants. She serves on the Chapter Partnering Committee and the Audit Committee. She was recently appointed to Co-Chair of the Joint National Conference for ASWA that will be held in 2011 in Charlotte, N.C.

Harris is the past national chair of the American Society of Women’s Accountants Education Foundation and served on the Board from 2005-2008. She received national recognition in 2004 from the ASWA Foundation when she received the national Woman of the Year Balance Award.

Harris also is a member of the Montana Society of CPAs, currently serving on the Continuing Professional Education committee, for which she has been a member since 2000 and served as chair from 2006-2008.

In 2009, Governor Brian Schweitzer appointed Harris to a 4-year term on the Montana Board of Public Accountants.

In her hometown of Absarokee, she is Chair of the Board of the Absaroka Fine Arts, which enables the area to have Shakespeare in the Parks as well as the annual Wine Tasting & Art Festival.

Harris graduated from Montana State University-Billings in 1993 with a degree in business administration, accounting. She opened an independent practice in Sept. 1993 in Absarokee. Prior to that she worked for a small CPA firm in Laurel, Mont. for 10 years.

A leader in the petroleum industry, Dr. Ballard was raised in Arkansas. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Oklahoma. He received his doctorate from the University of Texas and a Honorary Doctorate from Rocky Mountain College in 1995.

In 1952, Ballard met his wife, Merilyn, in her hometown of Poplar, Montana where he was working as an intern for a geologist during summer break. They were married the following summer. In 1956 they moved to Billings where Ballard was employed by Phillips Petroleum. In 1963 he formed, along with a partner, Balcron Oil. Ballard sold Balcron in 1987. Upon completion of his management contract with the new owners, Ballard formed another company, Ballard Petroleum, serving as the CEO and chairman of the board.

Ballard's relationship with Rocky began when he became a professor of geology in 1966. One of his many accomplishments during his Rocky tenure was establishing the geology department, which he chaired from 1973-1981. He first served on the RMCBoard in 1985 and was chair from 1992-1995. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Award in 1997 and inducted into the Alumni Hall of Fame in 1998. He had a profound effect on the financial stability of the institution by being part of two capital campaigns that raised \$40 million dollars for the college.

Ballard was a member of several professional societies, including the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Montana Geological Society, Billings Rotary (past president), Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma XI and Sigma Gamma Epsilon. He served on the Montana Oil & Gas Board, is past president of the Montana Petroleum Association, and the Rocky Mountain Oil & Gas Association. He served on the Board of the American Petroleum Institute and the National Petroleum Council.

Rick Larson, and his wife, Nicki, co-founded Employee Benefit Management Services (EBMS), Inc. in 1980 as a way to administer a self-funded health insurance plan they designed for a Montana manufacturer, launching one of the Northwest's first and foremost Third-Party Administration (TPA) companies. Over the past 30 years, EBMS

has created a system that provides cost effective plan management through integrated management programs for hundreds of clients located in Montana and throughout the United States.

Larson is a nationally recognized expert and speaker on the topic of self-funding and has chaired the 400-member Society of Professional Benefit Administrators and the National Association of Employee Benefit Administrators (representing more than 4 million U.S. employees).

While building their business Larson also sought ways to build a better Billings, serving on a number of non-profit boards, including Rocky Mountain College, St John's Lutheran Ministries, Ronald McDonald House of Billings, Ronald McDonald Charities of Montana, Billings Symphony Society, and the Western Heritage Center. Larson and his wife were Honorary Chairs for Black Tie Blue Jeans, RMC's annual scholarship benefit, in 2009.

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10/14/2010