

Dr. William and Marilyn Ballard have been named recipients of the 2011 Rocky Mountain College Philanthropist of the Year Award.

“Bill and Marilyn have been remarkable in their service to the College and their support for its students,” said RMC President Michael Mace. “They exemplify the spirit of philanthropy we admire and appreciate.”

Dr. Ballard 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, Mace noted.

The couple will be honored at a private reception in Prescott Hall on the RMC campus, Thursday, Aug. 11, 2011, from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

A leader in the petroleum industry, William W. Ballard was born in El Dorado, Arkansas and first came to Montana in 1952 while a college student at the University of Oklahoma. He acquired a summer job with Murphy Corporation that year and was sent to serve as a geological assistant in the newly discovered Poplar Oil Field. He met Marilyn in her hometown of Poplar at that time. They were married the following summer.

On completion of a master’s degree in 1956, he accepted a job with Phillips Petroleum Company in their Billings divisional office. His duties included geological mapping of potential oil reservoirs in Central Montana and Western North Dakota. In 1957, he was accepted at the University of Texas for a Ph.D. program. During this program he taught laboratory classes in various geologic subjects.

On completion of the Ph.D., in January 1961, he accepted a job with Phillips in the Denver-based Exploration Projects Group. He authored a manual for carbonate rock interpretation after which he taught carbonate geology to Phillips geologists in various divisional offices. He was transferred to the company headquarters in Bartlesville, Oklahoma in 1962.

In June 1963, together with William Cronoble, Ballard resigned to form a new company, Balcron Oil, and opened offices in Billings. His present company, Ballard Petroleum Holdings LLC, dates back to March 1992 when Ballard and Associates, Inc. was formed as an entity on which to build a new company. After securing an acquisition in Oklahoma, Ballard Energy Limited Partnership was formed with Ballard and Associates serving as the managing general partner. The assets of Ballard and Associates and Ballard Energy Limited Partnership were rolled into Ballard Petroleum LLC on January 1, 1997 and into Ballard Petroleum Holdings in February 2001. The company operates in Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Oklahoma. Ballard is CEO and Chairman of the Board of the Company.

Ballard's relationship with RMC dates to 1966 when he was invited to join the faculty of the College as a part-time professor of geology. In 1973, the college introduced a geological degree, and he was named Chairman of the Department of Geology, a position he held part-time until the fall of 1981. He served on the Board of Trustees from 1985 to 2005, is a past Chairman of the Board, and was awarded a Honorary Doctorate degree by that institution in May 1995. In addition he was awarded a Distinguished Service award by the Rocky Mountain College Alumni Association in 1997, and included into the college's Hall of Fame in 1999. He rejoined the Board in 2010.

In addition to serving on the RMC Board, Ballard serves on the Board of Montana Petroleum Association, the Wells Fargo Bank Community Board, the Rocky Mountain Technology Foundation Board and is past chairman of the Billings Clinic Board.

Ballard is a member of several professional societies, including the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Economic Palentologists and Mineralogist, Montana Geological Society, Billings Rotary Club (past president), Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma XI and Sigma

Gamma Epsilon. He also served a term on the Montana Oil and Gas Board, is a past president of the Montana Petroleum Association, and the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association, who presented him with an honorary life membership in October 1998. He served a term on the Board of the American Petroleum Institute, and was appointed to the National Petroleum Council in 1991. He was the recipient of the UUNO Sahinen award, awarded by Montana Tech in May 2004, and was inducted into the Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Hall of Fame in 2004. In 2007 he was named "Wildcatter of the Year" by the Independent Petroleum Association of the Mountain States.

Bill and his wife, Marilyn, have three children (Linda, Dave and Jeff) and five grandchildren.