COMMENCEMENT

Montana Tech's 1998 Distinguished Alumni

To qualify as a distinguished alumnus, Montana Tech graduates must have established a professional career for at least 10 years and have contributed in an outstanding manner to the furtherance of his or her profession. The recipients for this year's honor are:

Robert E. Morris BME55 - After working as a metallurgist for ASARCO in Mexico for many years, Morris started his own company in 1979 and sold it 13 years later. He has always been interested in helping the needy and in 1992, he was instrumental in bringing Jimmy Carter to Tijuana and San Diego and served on the Habitat for Humanity Board in that area for three years. He lives six months out of the year in Anaconda, MT and serves as president of the Anaconda Habitat for Humanity.

James J. Benner BPE71 - Jim began his career with Amerada Hess in Williston, ND as a production and reservoir engineer and then joined MAPCO as a production engineer. He later moved onto production engineer for Burlington Resources in Billings, MT and back to MAPCO again where he remained for eight years. Jim is a vice president for Narco, a division of The Montana Power Company.

Calvin Stevenson BME54&60 -

Editor's Note

Following is a story written by Betsy Cohen of The Montana Standard that I want to share with you about our third distinguished alumni recipient, Cal Stevenson.

Tempered by a Will to Succeed

by Betsy Cohen
of *The Montana Standard*

The industrial furnaces Calvin Stevenson builds are forged out of materials as nearly unyielding as his own mettle. And at 3100 degrees Fahrenheit, the furnaces still don't burn as fiercely as Stevenson's will to live - to continue making world-class furnaces and to sustain his close-knit family.

As a young Montana Tech student, Stevenson, now 67, worked summers as a switchman at the Anaconda Co. On July 5, 1950, a misstep cost Stevenson the use of both his legs.

Run over by a flaming ore car, the 17-year-old Anaconda native had to have his crushed legs amputated, one below the knee and one above the knee. But Stevenson did not let the trauma get in the way of his promising career in metallurgical engineering. Two months later he was enrolled for fall semester at the School of Mines. Stevenson now holds a master's degree in metallurgy.

There was no handicap access then. No ramps, no buttons to open doors, no elevators. But there were a lot of friends, Stevenson said. "All the guys took care of me," he said after receiving one of Montana Tech's distinguished alumni awards. "My friends used to pack me up and down the stairs in my wheelchair."

That Christmas he got his first artificial legs, and hasn't been in a wheelchair since. That's when he threw the word "can't" out of his vocabulary. "I got legs and two canes, and I could get anywhere," he said - like the top of smelter stacks, and up on the mine scaffolding. But convincing potential employers he had an able body to go with his able mind was difficult, Stevenson's wife, Mary, said. "It was a tough time getting jobs and proving to employers that he could climb scaffolding," she said.

He felt because of his handicap he had to be stronger and better - and had to prove himself all the time. He just worked a little harder and a little longer," Mary quietly commented, saying what the humble and soft-spoken Stevenson wouldn't.

After his first job as a switchman, Stevenson found work as a metallurgical research engineer, an analytical chemist and as director of research for a smelter supply company. Realizing that the industrial world needed fast, efficient and consistent furnaces, Stevenson helped invent and design some of the best furnaces in the business. He became vice president and then president and owner of Deltech Inc., which has serviced the world's leading mining companies and contracted with NASA's Apollo expedition to analyze rocks brought back from the moon. It's been a steady ride to the top of his field, but it hasn't been a smooth one, Stevenson said. In 1979 doctor's discovered a quickly spreading cancer and told him he had two weeks to live. His courage and his spirit for invention saved his life.

Stevenson threw in his world-class analytical skills with the faith in a Colorado physician's experimental cancer treatment and has outlived the original prognosis by nearly 20 years. The radical procedure involved removing most of his liver and taking chemotherapy treatments once a week for three and a half years. What keeps him going is the life he's created. "I've got my family and I've got my work. There's still a lot of things that need to get done," Stevenson said. But Mary disagrees. She thinks it's Stevenson's patience and love for people that drive him. "He has faith in himself and faith in others," she said. "He's really a people person and that's the cornerstone of his success - despite getting some hard knocks from some people, which would turn somebody else into a cynic."