



Media Advisory

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Jeannette Rankin Civil Liberties Awards Honor Retired Montana Supreme Court Justice James Nelson and Bozeman Attorney Jim Goetz

BOZEMAN, MT — The ACLU of Montana is dedicated to preserving and advancing civil liberties, but it's a mission we can't accomplish alone. The Jeannette Rankin Civil Liberties Awards recognize those whose commitment to the principles embodied in the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights make a real and significant difference in the lives of Montanans.

Retired Montana Supreme Court Justice Jim Nelson is no stranger to those who embrace the right to privacy. During his nearly 20 years as a justice on the Montana Supreme Court, Nelson was (and, in retirement, remains) an outspoken advocate for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. In 1997, he authored the landmark decision, *Gryczan v. State*, which declared Montana's felony sodomy statute an unconstitutional violation of the plaintiffs' rights of individual privacy. The ruling was cited seven years later by the United States Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas* which struck down anti-sodomy laws nationwide.

Bozeman Attorney Jim Goetz is widely recognized as one of Montana's preeminent constitutional litigators. He has stood up for individual rights and liberty in innumerable cases since first admitted to the bar in 1969. What many people don't know, however, is that he was one of the key players in establishing the Montana ACLU affiliate serving on the board of directors as a legal advisor. Most recently he has volunteered his expertise and his firm's resources as a cooperating attorney on the ACLU of Montana's domestic partnership case, *Donaldson and Guggenheim v. Montana*.

- WHAT:** Jeannette Rankin Civil Liberties Awards, honoring Montanans who demonstrate the strength of character and commitment to principles embodied in the ACLU's mission and vision and exemplified by Montana's own Jeannette Rankin – the first woman to serve in the U.S. Congress and the ACLU's first vice president.
- WHO:** **Retired Montana Supreme Court Justice Jim Nelson** for his commitment to civil liberties on the bench, especially the rights of LGBT Montanans
Bozeman Attorney Jim Goetz for his dedication to civil liberties and years of pro bono work for the ACLU, including his most recent work litigating the ACLU's case seeking domestic partnerships for same-sex couples
- WHEN:** Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013
6:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Museum of the Rockies
600 W. Kagy Blvd., Bozeman
- COST:** \$20 advance, \$25 at the door
Registration at www.aclumontana.org