



## **Media Advisory**

September 15, 2014

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### **Jeannette Rankin Civil Liberties Awards Honor Native American voting rights litigator Laughlin McDonald and Wolf Point voting rights plaintiffs**

GREAT FALLS, 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. Those we honor this year include:

**Laughlin McDonald, Director Emeritus of the ACLU Voting Rights Project**, significantly advanced voting rights for Native Americans in Montana by litigating important cases deciding those rights, including *Windy Boy v. Big Horn County* in 1986, *Old Person et alia v. Brown* in 1996, and most recently *Jackson et al v. Wolf Point School District* in 2013. McDonald has argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and numerous district courts and courts of appeals. He is the author of several books, including *A Voting Rights Odyssey: Black Enfranchisement in Georgia*, and *American Indians and the Fight for Equal Voting Rights*.

**Wolf Point Voting Rights Plaintiffs** Ronald Jackson, Ruth Jackson, Robert Manning, Patricia McGeshick, Lawrence Wetsit, Bill Whitehead and Lanette M. Clark stood up to a school district where white voters had more representation on the school board than Native Americans because of unconstitutional voting districts that gave white voters votes greater power than those of Native Americans. Thanks to their commitment, and the ACLU victory, all voters in Wolf Point now have an equal say about who serves on the school board.

**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:** **Laughlin McDonald, Director Emeritus of the ACLU Voting Rights Project** for his commitment to and litigation on behalf of voting rights, especially for Native Americans in Montana  
**Wolf Point Voting Rights Plaintiffs** Ronald Jackson, Ruth Jackson, Robert Manning, Patricia McGeshick, Lawrence Wetsit, Bill Whitehead and Lanette M. Clark for taking action to make sure all everyone in Wolf Point has a vote with equal weight in school board elections.

**WHEN:** Saturday, September 20, 2014  
6-8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** C.M. Russell Museum  
400 13th Street North, Great Falls

**COST:** \$10 per person, \$20 per family in advance; \$15/\$25 at the door  
Registration at [www.aclumontana.org](http://www.aclumontana.org)