

Glittery, grand night opens Morrison Center

It had all the trappings of a Broadway premiere: women in furs, men in tuxedos, limousines and all the glitter the city had to offer.

But the scene was not New York. It was Boise, Idaho on the opening night of the long-awaited Morrison Center for the Performing Arts.

The locally-produced performance of *My Fair Lady* opened April 7 to a house packed with 2,000 Boiseans elegantly dressed for what turned out to be one of the biggest social events in the city's history. After the final curtain call, more than 350 donors to the Morrison Center and their guests moved to the Morrison-Knudsen Plaza, where they enjoyed a late night supper and dancing.

Boise State used the premiere occasion to honor five individuals with Silver Medallions for their past support of the university. They included Velma Morrison, Joe Alhertson, J.R. Simplot, Gladys Langroise and Fred Norman.

In addition, three charter members were inducted into the Morrison Center Hall of Fame, which was created to recognize persons who have made distinguished contributions in philanthropy or in creation of the performing arts.

Inaugural members included Velma Morrison, whose leadership and financial support made the building possible; Ralph Comstock, who organized the community drive for the Morrison Center; and Fred Norman, who produced several shows to benefit the Center and organized community support.

The premiere evening began a new era for the arts in Idaho, an era when Boise's cultural opportunities will dramatically increase because of the Morrison Center's presence.

If the *My Fair Lady* production is any indication, the arts will fare well indeed. More than 18,000 people saw the show during its 9 performance run, making it the biggest show the state has seen.

The premiere month of April was designed to showcase Idaho groups, which included the Boise Opera, University of Idaho, Boise State University, and the Boise Philharmonic.

Outside groups will be booked beginning with the *Up with People* show May 1.

While the Morrison Center is paid for, money for its day-to-day operation must come from rent and other revenues. To help meet those expenses, the Morrison Center is seeking an endowment of \$5 million. On opening night it was announced that Edna Allen, the sister of Harry Morrison, will donate \$300,000 toward that endowment. Mrs. Velma Morrison pledged that the Morrison Foundation would match all funds donated up to a total of \$2.5 million, and Fred Norman said the *My Fair Lady* production will add \$113,000.



Photo by Eugene Pleuska

The crowd anticipates the curtain rising on *My Fair Lady* on the Morrison Center for the Performing Arts' opening night

Not enough funds for higher education

Idaho's university presidents and State Board of Education members faced a familiar scenario again this month after the Legislature left town without appropriating enough dollars to allow the state's system of higher education to carry on its current operations.

The Legislature appropriated \$78.9 million from the general fund for fiscal 1985, between \$2.3 million short of what the universities need to maintain the programs they now offer.

It is the fifth time since 1979 that higher education has been faced with the painful choice of either raising fees or cutting programs, or both.

If the past is an indication, a student fee increase is the means the State Board will use to balance the books. Three times since the spring of 1981 fees have gone up to meet budget shortfalls.

At its meeting later this week in

Moscow, the Board will debate increases ranging from \$50 to \$100 per semester.

After years of bare bones budgets, the 1984 Legislative session began with optimistic talk about increased appropriations for higher education. Educators were backed by a lengthy study conducted by the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry (IACI) which listed increased funding as its number one priority. Other recommendations included a constitutional amendment to allow tuition, a separate board of education to deal with public schools and a plan to institute a community college system.

But as the session wore on, IACI's

Commencement May 13

Graduation ceremonies will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, May 13 in the Pavilion. According to the President's office, speakers and other dignitaries have not yet been selected.

proposals were defeated one by one. A projected revenue drop in the last days before adjournment sealed higher education's fate. The result: a 9.6 percent increase over last year, which includes a 7 percent average salary increase, but is not sufficient to fund current programs.

BSU president John Keiser was disappointed with the outcome.

"We had hopes that this would be a year higher education could recover some of the losses it has suffered since 1979. It is difficult to explain to people why we still came up short when this year the sources of revenue were there, especially after the 4 percent sales tax passed," he said.

Keiser said he does not wish to see student fees go up, but will support an increase provided BSU receives a more equal share of the state's budget.

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Frank Church Chair contributions pouring in

Contributions continue to pour into the Frank Church Chair of Public Affairs in memory of Senator Church, who died April 7 at his home in Washington, D.C. of pancreatic cancer.

The fund was established by Boise State in late 1981 to honor Church for his 24 years of service in the U.S. Senate. Prior to Church's death, the endowment reached \$100,000, with the interest supporting public affairs conferences on the Middle East in 1983 and political repression in 1984.

At FOCUS deadline, the BSU Foundation had received more than \$10,000 in memorial gifts from all parts of the country in amounts from \$10 to \$500.

"Memorials are coming from people who were touched by Frank Church. It shows that he cared a lot for them, and now they are expressing their care for him," said Ben Hancock, BSU director of Development.

Hancock said the goal of the endowment is \$500,000, which will

yield enough interest to fund a full-time teaching position and continue to support the public affairs conferences held in Church's name.

In late February, Church donated his public papers and memorabilia to Boise State. That material was moved from Stanford University last week. Remodeling on a room to house that collection in the BSU Library will begin next month.

Memorial contributions in Senator Church's name can be sent to the BSU Foundation, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725.