

A Message from the Chavez Family

The Dennis Chavez Foundation endowed the U.S. Senator Dennis Chavez Lectureship to memorialize Chavez's legacy as a public servant and a champion of civil rights. Senator Chavez reflected on his years of service stating: "I believe history will give me credit that I have carried out my official duties in such a way that public service has always been emphasized. After election, a man is not a senator for the Democrats, or the Republicans, but for the people of the United States, and his state."

Chavez spoke for equality and fairness and against discrimination and bigotry. During World War II he worked to secure equal pay for military female nurses, who were being paid 50 percent less than their male counterparts. He introduced the Fair Practices Employment Act, noting that many of the men returning from World War II were not securing employment:

"(t)he bill does provide that a man cannot be kept from having a job because his name is Levine, Petachelli, or Garcia... It is most regrettable that some persons think that it was all well

and good to use such men and call upon them to make the supreme sacrifice in foreign fields...but that they are not good enough to receive equal treatment in our country... These boys did not die in vain."

Chavez's statue in the United States Capitol includes an inscription in Spanish, which reads, "Dejó este Señor una vereda trazada que nunca se olvidará. Lo hizo con la esperanza que otros la sigan." It means, "He left a path that will never be forgotten in the hope that others would follow."

The Chavez family wishes that the lectureship will inspire students and others to follow the enduring values of Senator Chavez's life and service.



courtesy NHCC



ESTABLISHING THE U.S. SENATOR DENNIS CHAVEZ ENDOWED LECTURESHIP/SYMPOSIUM ON LAW AND CIVIL RIGHTS

In the fall of 2009, the Dennis Chavez Foundation bestowed a gift of \$100,000 upon the law school for the establishment of an endowment for a lectureship/symposium on Law and Civil Rights, designed to promote awareness and academic discourse on U.S. Senator Dennis

Chavez and topics related to his legacy and life's work. The endowment creates the opportunity to invite scholars to deliver public lectures on topics related to Sen. Chavez's legacy, such as human rights, equal opportunity, Hispanics and New Mexico in government.



"I should like to be remembered as the man who raised a voice...at a time in the history of this body when we seem bent upon placing limitations on the freedom of the individual."

—Sen. Dennis Chavez
May 12, 1950 U.S. Senate floor session

The UNM School of Law would like to extend a special thanks to:

The Chavez & Tristani Families
Arthur R. Gomez and Cissie Coy,
authors of *Chavez, El Senador*

The National Hispanic Cultural
Center History and Literary Archives

State Bar of New Mexico

Center for Southwest Research

The Honorable M. Christina Armijo

Carmen Rawls

John Cordova

Kenesson Design, Inc.

Our UNM Main Campus,
UNM Foundation, Local Media and
UNM Law Media Center Staff and Partners

THE

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October 26, 2017

NM SCHOOL
OF LAW

The Honorable M. Christina Armijo

The Honorable M. Christina Armijo, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico, was appointed to the United States District Court in 2001, after unanimous confirmation by the United States Senate. She has served as Chief Judge since 2012. Prior to joining the federal bench, she served on the New Mexico Court of Appeals from 1996 to 2001. When she was appointed to the Court of Appeals she became the first Latina to serve in any appellate court in the State of New Mexico. She is a 1975 graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law.



Chief Judge Armijo presides over a federal District which ranks first in the Tenth Circuit and tenth in the US with respect to weighted filings (including both civil and criminal cases). The District of New Mexico maintains the highest criminal felony caseload among the five Border federal districts.

During her tenure as Chief Judge, she has overseen the selection of seven full-time and two part-time United States Magistrate Judges and a Chief Probation Officer. For the past five years she has been involved in structuring a significant national space reduction/space realignment project in the District of New Mexico. The final design and procurement phases are now complete for the US Bankruptcy Court's relocation to the Pete V. Domenici Courthouse. This project aligns with the Administrative Office's national space reduction initiative and will save the Judiciary approximately \$1 million annually on rent and security costs by decreasing the size of the District's footprint. This project is one of the largest cost reduction projects in the nation.

Chief Judge Armijo previously served as president of the New Mexico Women's Bar Association. In October 2011 she was awarded the *Henrietta Pettijohn* Award by the New Mexico Women's Bar Association for her work and commitment to advancing women in the legal profession. She enjoys delving into New Mexico history in her spare time.

EVENT PROGRAM

WELCOME
UNM Law School Co-Dean
Alfred Mathewson

THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF SENATOR CHAVEZ
Gloria Tristani

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER
Former Dean and Professor of Law
Kevin Washburn

LECTURE
The Honorable M. Christina Armijo, Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico

"The Legacy of Senator Dennis Chavez: Choices, Challenges and Consequences, and His Courage and Resolve in Safeguarding the Rights of Individuals."

CLOSING REMARKS
UNM Law School
Co-Dean Alfred Mathewson

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The UNM School of Law invites everyone to visit with Chief Judge Armijo and the Chavez family at a reception before the lecture.

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El Senador

Dennis Chavez grew up in the Barelmas neighborhood of Albuquerque in a Spanish-speaking household. It was during those early years, in the late 1800s, that he developed an internal foundation that would drive him and guide him for the rest of his life.

Chavez left school at 12 to help support his family. During his six-day-a-week job delivering groceries for Highland Grocery Store, he became concerned with inequities in class and race that he witnessed. His time off was spent at the public library immersing himself in U.S. history.

Before he could vote, Chavez became involved with the Democratic Party. His exceptional ability to communicate with the state's Spanish-speaking voters so impressed A.A. Jones during his successful 1916 U.S. senatorial campaign that Sen. Jones invited Chavez to join his staff and move to Washington, D.C. Determined to become a lawyer, Chavez spent his days on Capitol Hill and enrolled in evening law classes at the Law Department at Georgetown University, earning his degree in 1920.

Chavez returned to Albuquerque to set up a law practice, but his future was in the political arena. After one term in the New Mexico Legislature, he served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1935, he be-

came the only Hispanic in the U.S. Senate, where he served until his death in 1962, establishing himself as a vigorous advocate of civil and human rights.

Chavez also was concerned with the development of resources in the West. He actively supported measures such as water and soil conservation programs, and he introduced many bills to protect Indian lands, voting rights and self determination.

Chavez conferred with every president from Hoover to Kennedy, and ultimately became one of the most powerful members of Congress, but when he returned home to New Mexico, he always delighted in the opportunity to visit with his fellow New Mexicans. And he never forgot his humble roots.



courtesy NHCC

Dennis Chavez, 1888–1962



courtesy NHCC

1888 • Dennis Chavez is born in the village of Los Chavez in the Territory of New Mexico, the second oldest of eight children.

1895 • The Chavez family moves to Barelmas, in the heart of downtown Albuquerque.

1900 • Chavez drops out of school to help support his family.

1903 • A delivery boy for a local grocer, Chavez refuses to deliver a wagonload of groceries to the Santa Fe Railroad during a workers' strike. He is fired as a result.

1911 • Chavez marries Imelda Espinosa during daily mass at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Albuquerque.

1917 • Dennis and Imelda Chavez move to Washington, D.C., where Dennis works as assistant legislative clerk for U.S. Sen. A.A. Jones of New Mexico. He begins attending evening classes at Georgetown University School of Law.



courtesy NHCC

1920 • Chavez graduates from law school and returns to Albuquerque to set up a practice. He becomes active in local politics.



courtesy NHCC

1922 • Chavez is elected to the New Mexico House of Representatives. In light of New Mexico's nearly 40 percent illiteracy rate, he successfully sponsors legislation to provide free textbooks for all of the state's school children.

1930 • Chavez is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; he is re-elected in 1932. He chairs the Indian Affairs Committee, and in 1933 sponsors a bill authorizing compensatory payments of \$750,000 to New Mexico Pueblo Indians for misappropriated lands.



1935 • Gov. Clyde Tingley appoints Chavez to the U.S. Senate following a tragic plane crash that claimed the life of Sen. Bronson Cutting. He easily wins the election the following year. Chavez is the first native born Hispanic senator.



courtesy NHCC

1944 • Chavez introduces the Fair Employment Practices Commission bill, prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, color, national origin or ancestry in the workplace. The bill does not pass and it was not until the 1964 Civil Rights Bill that these rights were protected.



1950 • Chavez speaks out against Sen. Joseph McCarthy's anti-Communist campaign, after which members of the U.S. Senate unsuccessfully move to censure McCarthy.

1952 • Chavez co-sponsors the Federal-Aid Highway Act, which ultimately leads to building a national highway system.

1955 • Chavez chairs the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Defense Spending. His efforts help to build up the country's military strength around the world and secure funds to develop New Mexico's national laboratories.



1962 • Chavez dies of a heart attack. He is buried in Albuquerque's Mount Calvary Cemetery with Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson providing the eulogy.



1966 • A statue of Chavez is dedicated in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren speak at the ceremony.



1988 • During the centennial celebration of Sen. Chavez's birth, President Ronald Reagan declares National Dennis Chavez Day.



1999 • Sculptor Cynthia Rowland's bronze and granite sculpture of Chavez visiting with a constituent, with panels depicting his life, is dedicated in Albuquerque's Civic Plaza.



photo Nancy Harbert