

A MEMORIAL

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE LATE JAMES A. LEGER FOR HIS OUTSTANDING COMBAT SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II, HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AS A TEACHER AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR, HIS INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY BETTERMENT AND HIS SERVICE TO THE FARMING AND RANCHING COMMUNITIES OF NEW MEXICO; ENCOURAGING THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SAN MIGUEL COUNTY TO CONSIDER RENAMING MULLINS DRIVE IN THE CITY OF LAS VEGAS IN HIS HONOR.

WHEREAS, James A. Leger was born and raised on a cattle ranch in eastern San Miguel county and he attended a one-room schoolhouse located on that ranch and graduated from Tucumcari high school; and

WHEREAS, during his formative years, the young James developed and perfected all of the skills associated with living a productive ranch life; and

WHEREAS, James later attended New Mexico state university where he studied vocational education and participated in the reserve officers' training corps; and

WHEREAS, during his second year at the university, James enlisted in the New Mexico national guard and was assigned to company C of the one hundred fourth anti tank battalion, and as a consequence of his reserve officers' training corps background, James was immediately promoted to the rank of sergeant; and

WHEREAS, his unit was later federalized and became part of the United States army and was reorganized as the eight hundred fourth tank destroyer battalion, which was attached to the thirty-fourth division detailed to North Africa for action against the Nazi invaders; and

WHEREAS, James fought with his unit through the North African campaign, including the final push to Tunisia; and

WHEREAS, after the conclusion of the North African campaign, James' unit was ordered into Italy where it fought up the "boot" and engaged in direct combat against the enemy in such places as Castellonarto, Teri, Priverno and Carpineto and, after breaking the Gustav line, was among the first to enter the "Eternal City"; and

WHEREAS, after taking Rome, his unit continued to push north as United States forces prepared to attack enemy fortifications along the Gothic line and after clearing the Gothic line, the push began to clear the Nazis from the Po valley; and

WHEREAS, during one direct encounter with enemy forces, James was one of only three survivors out of a unit of three hundred men and, during a later battle, James was severely wounded by shrapnel at which point he was evacuated from combat and returned to the United States; and

WHEREAS, once recovered from his injuries, James returned to New Mexico state university earning a bachelor of science degree in agricultural education; and

WHEREAS, James continued his personal education by completing his post-baccalaureate studies and earning a master's degree in school administration from New Mexico highlands university; and

WHEREAS, James began his career in education by teaching high school vocational agriculture in Mora and then accepted a teaching position moving him to the city of Las Vegas, where he later became a school administrator and where he remained until his retirement; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from his career in public education, James served the farmers and ranchers of New Mexico as the state director of the agriculture and conservation services of the United States department of agriculture; and

WHEREAS, he served the communities of Mora and Las Vegas as a member of a number of fraternal and veteran organizations, including the American legion, disabled American veterans, veterans of foreign wars, the lions club and the elks club and he made a personal contribution to law and order as a member and commander of the New Mexico mounted patrol troop three; and

WHEREAS, James resided on Mullins drive in the city of Las Vegas for thirty years and he was a dedicated and relentless advocate for the improvement of that thoroughfare; and

WHEREAS, in the last years of his life, James lobbied

his local legislative delegation to provide the funding for the pavement of Mullins drive, and although his efforts were successful, the work was not completed until after his passing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the memory of Mr. James A. Leger be honored for his outstanding contribution to his country and to the state of New Mexico as a selfless, dedicated and courageous fighter during World War II; his contributions to children as a long-time educator and school administrator; his service to ranchers and farmers statewide through his work with the United States department of agriculture; and his tireless involvement and work toward the betterment of his community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the board of county commissioners of San Miguel county be encouraged to consider honoring the memory of Mr. James A. Leger by renaming Mullins drive in the city of Las Vegas after Mr. Leger; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the board of county commissioners of San Miguel county and to the family of the late Mr. James A. Leger. _____