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A JOINT MEMORIAL

EXPRESSING THE SORROW OF THE LEGISLATURE AT THE PASSING OF  
FORMER REPRESENTATIVE J. PAUL TAYLOR, THE "CONSCIENCE OF THE  
LEGISLATURE".

WHEREAS, John Paul Taylor y Romero was born in  
Chamberino on August 24, 1920 and departed from this world on  
February 12, 2023, surrounded by his family and caregivers;  
and

WHEREAS, born a little after World War I, in his  
one hundred two years, J. Paul Taylor lived through some of  
the most significant and pivotal times in modern American  
history, including the Great Depression and World War II,  
both of which shaped what has become known as the greatest  
generation; the Manhattan project; the space race with Russia  
and Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon; the assassinations of  
John and Bobby Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the  
enactment of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and federal  
Voting Rights Act of 1965; the right of American Indians to  
vote in New Mexico; the Vietnam conflict; *perestroika*; both  
the building and the destruction of the Berlin wall; the  
North American Free Trade Agreement; the dawning of the  
information age; New Mexico's *Cuarto Centenario*; and  
September 11, 2001, when the world changed; and

WHEREAS, descended on his mother's side from

1 Juan de Cabeza de Vaca, a soldier who came to what is now  
2 New Mexico with Coronado in 1540, J. Paul Taylor had an  
3 abiding love for history; and

4 WHEREAS, he was quoted in a newspaper article as saying,  
5 "I was always interested in history. From the fifth grade, I  
6 knew I wanted to be a history teacher."; and

7 WHEREAS, he earned his degree in history from what is  
8 now New Mexico state university and, after the war, worked  
9 for the Las Cruces public school district as a teacher,  
10 principal and administrator for more than thirty years; and

11 WHEREAS, J. Paul, as he was affectionately known in the  
12 roundhouse, served house district 33 in Dona Ana county from  
13 1987 to 2005 and served on multiple health and human service  
14 interim and standing committees during his eighteen-year  
15 career, as well as education, voters and elections and twelve  
16 years on house appropriations and finance, where he fought  
17 for people-focused budgets; and

18 WHEREAS, J. Paul was the embodiment of Rooseveltian  
19 democratic ideals and was a tireless advocate for those less  
20 fortunate, particularly children and seniors; and

21 WHEREAS, he earned the sobriquet "the conscience of the  
22 legislature" for his unwavering commitment to social justice;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, another of his passions was New Mexico's  
25 cultural history; in 2004, as chair of the 2003

1 reorganization committee, he shepherded through the  
2 legislature the elevation of the office of cultural affairs  
3 to the cabinet-level cultural affairs department, along with  
4 three other departments: aging and long-term services,  
5 veterans' services and Indian affairs; and

6 WHEREAS, as a man who dedicated his long life to public  
7 service, his accolades, awards and honors are too long to  
8 catalog in a memorial, but they included legislator of the  
9 year, legislator of the decade and similar awards in 1989,  
10 1991, 1992, 1996, 1998 and 2002; he received an honorary  
11 doctorate from New Mexico state university in 1985 for his  
12 "...exemplary service as an educator, civic leader, Hispanic  
13 historian, architectural conservationist, antiquarian and  
14 builder of libraries in his native New Mexico; and for his  
15 unselfish and visionary leadership to education, museums, and  
16 diverse other public institutions..."; and he may be the  
17 legislator most lauded by his peers, as they have passed at  
18 least four memorials recognizing and praising him; and

19 WHEREAS, like his awards, his service on myriad boards  
20 and commissions is also too lengthy to list, but in addition  
21 to serving on the board of regents of the museum of  
22 New Mexico, the board of trustees of the national  
23 Hispanic cultural center and the Branigan center in  
24 Las Cruces, he served on numerous other historical, arts,  
25 charitable and civic organizations; and

1           WHEREAS, the state's J. Paul Taylor juvenile  
2 detention center, New Mexico state university's  
3 J. Paul Taylor social justice symposium and the charter  
4 school J. Paul Taylor academy have been named in his honor;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, the generosity of J. Paul and his beloved wife,  
7 Mary Daniels Taylor, has no better example than when they,  
8 with their family's support, decided to give one final  
9 magnificent gift to the people of the state they loved. The  
10 Taylors donated their national historic home and property in  
11 Mesilla and their Spanish colonial, Mexican and New Mexican  
12 art collections to the cultural affairs department to be a  
13 permanent cultural monument and historic site; and

14           WHEREAS, Representative J. Paul Taylor will be  
15 remembered in the New Mexico legislature as a statesman and a  
16 gracious and honorable gentleman, un gran caballero, and it  
17 is the legislature's fervent hope that New Mexicans for  
18 generations to come will visit Mesilla and the  
19 Taylor Reynolds Barela Mesilla historic site and know how  
20 this extraordinary citizen served his state with unparalleled  
21 dedication and distinction;

22           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
23 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that it officially and personally mourn  
24 the passing of the great gentleman from Dona Ana county and  
25 that it express its sorrow, heartfelt sympathy and sincere

1 condolences to the family members of Representative  
2 J. Paul Taylor on the passing of their father, grandfather  
3 and great-grandfather and to his loving caregivers and  
4 friends; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature express its  
6 sympathy and condolences to the community members of Mesilla  
7 who have lost not just a loved and honored citizen, but  
8 someone who has been a presence throughout most, if not all,  
9 of their lives; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
11 transmitted to the family of the Honorable J. Paul Taylor. \_\_\_\_\_

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