

A JOINT MEMORIAL

EXPRESSING THE CONDOLENCE OF THE LEGISLATURE UPON THE DEATH  
OF FORMER REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE E. FETTINGER.

WHEREAS, the legislature was saddened to hear of the death of former  
Representative George E. Fettinger on July 3, 2003; and

WHEREAS, former Representative Fettinger was born February 27, 1929 in  
Rochester, New York, and moved to New Mexico in 1953 when he was stationed at  
Kirtland air force base; and

WHEREAS, as he said in a 1968 interview, as he was considering a run for  
the governorship of New Mexico, "The area just appealed to me after the first shock.  
I landed at the sunport during a sandstorm."; and

WHEREAS, George graduated with honors from the university of New  
Mexico law school in 1958 and moved to Alamogordo to practice law, which he did  
for almost four decades; and

WHEREAS, George was elected to the house of representatives in 1964,  
where he served for almost twenty years; and

WHEREAS, George's legislative career spanned a time that included some  
of the most interesting politics and vital issues of the last half of the twentieth  
century in New Mexico, and a lot of his legislative work still stands today; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Representative Fettinger ran for speaker of the house  
but lost on the second vote to Representative Walter Martinez, leader of the "Mama  
Lucy's"; and

WHEREAS, George was part of the "Cowboy Coalition" that elected

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Representative Gene Samberson in 1979 and was chairman of the house judiciary committee during and after the infamous penitentiary riot of 1980; and

WHEREAS, George became New Mexico's most knowledgeable and influential legislator on corrections issues, working tirelessly to ensure that the legislature provided the resources necessary to improve the corrections system, from increased funding to needed statutory changes; and

WHEREAS, George was also interested in improving the state's education system and was instrumental in establishing the state's system of community colleges; and

WHEREAS, Alamogordo had the supreme good fortune to be represented by two of the most powerful men in the legislature, Representative George E. Fettinger and Senator Aubrey Dunn; and

WHEREAS, when people around the roundhouse reminisce about the legislature in the sixties and seventies, they remember George Fettinger's amazing intellect, his sense of ethics and, like his senate colleague, his stamina in outlasting his opponents in committee; and

WHEREAS, when he considered a run for the governorship in 1968, George articulated concerns that sound remarkably familiar today, including wanting to use the prestige of the governor's office to attract industry to New Mexico; wanting to focus on bringing into the state more light, technical industry and electronics industries that would not require large amounts of water; wanting to overhaul the educational system; and wanting to press for a federal land-claims court to settle land title disputes in northern New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, George's career as an attorney was also noteworthy because

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he argued two landmark cases before the United States supreme court, the most famous being *Mescalero v. Jones*, one of the seminal cases dealing with state taxation of Indian property; and

WHEREAS, George Fettinger was an active member of the state and national bar associations, was active in community affairs and was fittingly named Alamogordo's citizen of the year in 1993;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that sincere condolences be extended to the family of Representative George E. Fettinger; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to his wife, Nell Fettinger, and family.

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