

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO AWARD DR. VICTOR WESTPHALL A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL IN RECOGNITION OF HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES.

WHEREAS, in order to honor those who fought and died in the Vietnam war, and to give the survivors a spiritual home, Dr. Victor Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel, which would later become the Vietnam veterans national memorial state park at Angel Fire; and

WHEREAS, in building the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel, Dr. Westphall honored the courage and sacrifice of his own son, Victor David Westphall, III, who gave his life in the Vietnam war; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Westphall built the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel in 1968, a period in which the nation was divided over the war being fought by the United States in Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Americans in 1968 were deeply divided over the Vietnam war, while the soldiers returning from the Vietnam war were often shunned and scapegoated as blameworthy for the United States' policies in southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, in being the first to build a memorial honoring those who had fallen in the service of their country, Dr.

Westphall bravely made a stand in the name of honor during a time of great social unrest; and

WHEREAS, the congressional gold medal is the nation's most distinguished award given to civilians, and it is an honor befitting Dr. Westphall's acts of outstanding principle, courage and service in building the Vietnam veterans peace and brotherhood chapel;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation be requested to introduce legislation to award the congressional gold medal to Dr. Victor Westphall in recognition of his great service to the nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional delegation and to Governor Richardson.