



## NMSU Library News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jeanette Smith, NMSU Library, (505) 646-7492, [jcsmith@lib.nmsu.edu](mailto:jcsmith@lib.nmsu.edu)

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### Peña Endowment to Build Farm and Ranch Collections

The New Mexico State University Library announces the creation of the Abe M. and Viola R. Peña Endowment for Farming and Ranching Collections in the Rio Grande Historical Collections. The endowment, established by Abe M. and Viola R. Peña, will support the acquisition, preservation, processing and sharing of primary research materials on the history of farming and ranching in New Mexico and the Southwest.



*Abe M. and Viola R. Peña. Photo, NMSU Library, Rio Grande Historical Collections*

The Library expresses its sincere appreciation for the Abe M. and Viola R. Peña Endowment and the many contributions of the Peña family over the years. During the 1970s, Abe Peña was one of the original founders and organizers of the Library's Rio Grande Historical Collections (RGHC). He served as a member of the RGHC board. A long term donor to the RGHC, the Durango Microfilming Project and Library Associates, he has also given his papers to the RGHC. The papers document his numerous accomplishments, including ranching, foreign service, politics, writing and service with state and national organizations.

Born in San Mateo, New Mexico, Peña is a 1949 NMSU agriculture graduate. He was the president of NMSU's Conquistador Club from 1948 to 1949, and he was selected as Conquistador of the Year in 2001. He received an honorary doctorate from NMSU in 1978. He studied sheep breeding in Australia as a Fulbright Scholar from 1953 to 1954. In 1955, he married Viola R. Cisneros. From 1958 to 1972, he owned and operated with his family the Peña and Sons Land and Livestock Corporation. During this time he served on the boards of the Grants Chamber of Commerce, the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, the New Mexico Livestock Board and the National Wool Growers Association.

From 1972 to 1976, he was the director of the Peace Corps in Honduras and Costa Rica, and from 1976 to 1984 he was the mission director of the United States Agency for International Development in Paraguay and Bolivia. In 1984, he returned to family ranching in New Mexico.

Peña's national service includes two years on the national board of directors of the American Association of

Retired Persons and service as Vice President of the National Hispanic Cultural Center. He has also been active in the American Red Cross, the New Mexico Hospital Board, Toastmasters and many other organizations.

He has written history columns for the *Cibola County Beacon*, and in 1997, his book *Memories of Cibola: Stories from New Mexico Villages*, was published by the University of New Mexico Press. For more information on the Abe M. and Viola R. Peña Endowment for Farming and Ranching Collections, please contact the Library's Development Officer, Lesley Heiser, at (505) 646-3642.