Welcome from Debbie Widger!

I have the honor of serving as President of the NMSU Pioneers (very exciting for me), having been involved with this group since inception in 1984. Dr. Thomas saw the importance of keeping the NMSU family and its history alive. I know I have big shoes to fill.

Mil Gracias, Dr. Conroy for a great job this last year as Pioneer President! I’d like to extend a special welcome to our new and returning board members!

George Abernathy · Emmit Brooks · Paul Comeau · Bill Conroy · Gary Donart · Dianna Gibson · Conrad Keyes · Helen Molina · George Mul Holland · Warren Noland · Josie Pena · Charles Pfeifer · Rosemarie Sanchez · Mary Sherman · Irvin Skelton · Denise Welsh

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a retired NMSU employee and a dues paying member or you are being provided a ‘complimentary’ membership as a recent retired employee eligible to become an active Pioneer or you have worked at NMSU for 20 years.

We hope you will continue to be involved in NMSU by attending various events on campus, including luncheons, meeting our Pioneer Book Scholarship recipients at the annual gelato and more. We look forward to seeing YOU on campus!

Please bookmark our website for updates and e-newsletters:
http://advancing.nmsu.edu/pioneers
Optimists and Pioneers Mobilize to Help Aggies

“We started out with smaller scholarships of $300 or so, but they have grown,” Noland said. “The number of applicants has increased as well.”

Studies linking poverty and a lack of social mobility places increasing importance on institutions like NMSU, which ranked in the Top 12 percent of schools that help improve their students’ economic status, according to College NET’s Social Mobility Index. Increasing access to college, especially among lower-income students, is one area where the Optimist Club’s partnership with NMSU has the greatest impact.

The group’s efforts to fund scholarships for local students has been so successful that its Scholarship Committee lobbied to double the number of awards given to students.

“The students who apply understand that education will better their lives,” Noland said.

When Noland and Optimist President Tommy Esparza learned about Giving Tuesday, they were intrigued by the possibility of an additional funding source. The inaugural event at NMSU in 2015, and its focus on assisting young Las Crucens who value higher learning, aligned with the Optimist Club’s goals to encourage students to pursue their dreams. The partnership with NMSU also created new ways for the Optimists to stay updated on students’ progress.

“Our partnership with the NMSU Foundation will make it possible to know how many students have graduated, and we’ll be better able to keep track of our numbers. We’ll also be able to help more students to attend college and pay for school-related expenses,” said Noland.

The Optimists contributed $3,000 to be matched for Giving Tuesday, resulting in the creation of the Optimist Club Current Use Endowment, a scholarship that will benefit students for years to come.

Committed Aggie Warren Noland, Emeritus Associate Dean for NMSU’s College of Health and Social Services, has been recognized for his service to local and international communities, notably with a Campus Globalization Award in 2000. Noland is also a longtime member of both the NMSU Pioneers and the Las Cruces Optimist Club.

But Noland says he is most enthusiastic about positively impacting young people by increasing their access to education.

His mentors at NMSU ingrained that value in him throughout his time as a student and his career. “Dr. Gerald Thomas expressed the belief that the way you improve your standing is through education,” said Noland. “I took that to heart as a member of the NMSU community and it continues to influence my work with the Optimist Club and with young people.”

With the Las Cruces Optimist Club, Noland focuses on increasing opportunities for young people to attend college. For 20 years, the club has awarded scholarships to help students realize their college dreams.

“I am proud to be a part of the Pioneers, and collaborations like this show how the Pioneers enhance NMSU.” - Dr. Warren Noland

Dr. Warren Noland and Tommy Esparza sign the Las Cruces Optimist Club Current Use Agreement that will award scholarships to area high school students.
The Retirees Remember Scholarship Connects
A Legacy and A Future Centered on Students

The Pioneers demonstrate that the connection between retirees and the university’s mission endures long after retirement.

When Dr. Ken Van Winkle, President of the NMSU-Alamogordo campus, invited the Pioneers to Emeriti Pi, the menu included coffee, pie and an exciting spirit of philanthropy. It was Larry and Dee Beck’s first opportunity to meet Van Winkle. He described the impact of endowed scholarships on students, and talked about NMSU’s Giving Tuesday initiative, and they were intrigued. The first-ever Giving Tuesday would match scholarship gifts, dollar-for-dollar, creating new possibilities for scholarship endowments and other initiatives. Wheels started turning for the Becks, who had received proceeds from the estates of their recently deceased mothers.

“Larry and I immediately looked at each other, simultaneously thought of our mothers, who were real proponents of education, nodded, and Larry said, ‘ Couldn’t we do that? Create a Retiree Scholarship?’ The seeds for the Retirees Remember scholarship were planted at that moment.”

The Becks envisioned a tribute to mothers who had long championed education as a way to improve lives, and viewed the scholarship as a testament to the community college model and the perseverance of students. Other Alamogordo retirees were quick to voice support for the idea of a scholarship endowment and expressed willingness to contribute. News of the Giving Tuesday effort and the Beck’s commitment spread rapidly across the campus via e-mail and social media.

By the end of Giving Tuesday, enough had been raised to secure the match and create the Retirees Remember Scholarship, which will help community college students to achieve their dreams.

“We were just so pleased that other retirees joined us and made contributions. It was all about the students.” - Dee Beck
Save the Date for our Summer Luncheon!

Wednesday, July 20
11:15 AM - 1:00 PM
Columbus Center
901 Avenida de Mesilla

Guests:
University Advancement Leadership Team
(pictured left with Chancellor Carruthers)

Leslie Cervantes, Associate Vice-President, Alumni Engagement and Stewardship
Andrea Tawney, Ph.D., Vice President
Terra Winter, CFRE, Associate Vice-President, Development
Tina Byford, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer

Show your Aggie pride by purchasing an NMSU license plate for your vehicle. It is just another way to show your support because $25 of the $37 annual fee goes directly to NMSU Scholarships. Visit [http://www.mvd.newmexico.gov](http://www.mvd.newmexico.gov) for more information.

Next NMSU Pioneers Board of Directors Meeting:
Wednesday, June 15, 2016
10:00 AM
Tentative:
TEAL Classroom
Hardman & Jacobs Undergraduate Learning Center
Parking has been reserved in Parking Lot 49 (Frenger Food Court)