



**Governor Susana Martinez Announces
2016 New Mexico True Heroes**

*2016 Honorees Devoted to Making Life Better and Safer for Children, Families,
Veterans, and Wildlife*

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Governor Susana Martinez announced the 2016 New Mexico True Heroes, five New Mexicans devoted to making New Mexico a better place to live, work and raise a family.

“Our 2016 New Mexico True Heroes all have one thing in common – they go above and beyond every day, leading by example to make our state a better place,” Governor Martinez said. “These five New Mexicans work to make our communities safer from criminals, help more children have a chance to reach for their dreams, serve our veterans, and care for and protect our animals and wildlife. Through their commitment, compassion, and service, they exemplify what it means to be New Mexico True.”

This year’s New Mexico True Heroes are:

Nicole Chavez-Lucero of Albuquerque showed strength and courage in working to make New Mexico safer from violent criminals following the murder of her son Jaydon. She fought hard to help pass Jaydon’s Law, which give judges complete access to the criminal history of offenders for use in sentencing and bail decisions. Chavez-Lucero also cofounded a community organization to improve public safety and support crime victims’ families.

Michelle and Clay Schroff of Albuquerque advocate for and serve children in need. Their Aspen Project helps connect orphaned and other at-risk children with organizations and resources that help love, care, and protect more New Mexico kids. Additionally, Project Zoë serves at-risk young women between the ages of 13 and 25 by encouraging personal growth, instilling self-worth, and helping them become the best they can be. The Schroffs have also fostered more than 40 children in addition to their six adopted and four biological children.

Kenneth Riege of Gallup is U.S. Air Force veteran dedicated to serving his fellow veterans. He raises money, hosts events, and personally helps connect more veterans

with services and care they need and deserve, such as helping those in need find assistance for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or even driving fellow veterans to medical appointments around the state. Riege is also heavily involved in the Quilts of Valor program, and was instrumental in helping Gallup earn recognition as both the Most Patriotic Small Town in America and a Purple Heart City.

Dr. Kathleen Ramsay of Espanola founded both the New Mexico Wildlife Center and the Land of Enchantment Wildlife Foundation. She works to help low-income families care for their pets, and also and trains and mentors others to care for New Mexico's animals and wildlife.

"Our New Mexico True Heroes shine a spotlight on our state's greatest treasure: our people," said Cabinet Secretary Rebecca Latham. "We are surrounded by so much good every day, and our New Mexico True Heroes put everyday leaders like these front and center, where their incredible efforts can help inspire even more New Mexicans to do more to make our state a better place."

The New Mexico True Heroes Awards were developed by the New Mexico Tourism Department in partnership with the Gildan New Mexico Bowl in 2014. Dozens of nominations were submitted from friends, family members, students, and co-workers. A panel of community leaders representing areas from all over the state determined the finalists. This year's honorees will be recognized at the 2016 Gildan New Mexico Bowl both during the player's luncheon on December 16 and on the field during the game on December 17. Each will also receive a \$500 gift card from Advanced Presentation Systems in Albuquerque.

"There are countless great stories and great people in our state and we are honored to be able to once again honor them at New Mexico's premier sports event," said Gildan New Mexico Bowl Executive Director Jeff Siembieda. "ESPN and the Gildan New Mexico Bowl say 'thank you' to these heroes who make our communities better places each and every day."

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