

Doña Ana County Historical Society Annual Awards Program

Saturday, January 27, 2024
La Posta Restaurant in Mesilla



Today, in addition to all of the people awards, we will be highlighting the Native American petroglyphs on the north side of Tonuco Mtn. for the Old Timer's Award. Photo by Jim Eckles

Doña Ana County Historical Society 2024 Board of Directors

President: Dennis Daily
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Education / Scholarships: open
Book Sales / Annual Awards: Susan Krueger
Liaison to City Museums: Garland Courts
Liaison to Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum: Heather Reed

If you would like to help out on a committee or with some other aspect of the Society, by all means, volunteer. Just contact one of the officers above and offer your assistance. Our email address is: 19dachs63@gmail.com Thank you.

Doña Ana County Historical Society 57th Annual Awards Program

Welcome Dennis Daily, President

Installation of 2024 Officers and Board Members Dennis Daily

Program

Master of Ceremonies..... Susan Krueger, Awards Committee Chairwoman

Awards

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award Dan Aranda
for *Episodes From Apache Lands*

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award Frank Brito
for *Indians, Latinos, and Confederates, A Western Family: 1598-1973*

Hall of Fame Award..... Pat Taylor

Hall of Fame Award..... Consuelo Rios Lerma

Heritage Award Dr. Joe B. Armstrong

Gemoets Prize Elisa Sanchez

Hiram Hadley Prize Christopher Schurtz

Old Timer's Award Tonuco Mtn. Native American Rock Art

Building With Historical Significance Women's Improvement Association

Building With Historical Significance Fairacres School

Pasajero Del Camino Real Award

This award is given to author(s) of a significant historical publication about events, persons, places or issues in Doña Ana County or the nearby area.

Dan Aranda for his book *Episodes From Apache Lands*.

Born in Las Cruces, in 1947, Dan is a retired firefighter and member of several historical societies, including the Doña Ana County Historical Society, the Cochise County Historical Society, English Westerners and is a proud charter member of the Order of the Indian Wars, an organization dedicated to preserving this important part of our national heritage. In the late 1980's, Dan was the commander for the Department of the Rio Grande of Council on America's Military Past.

Dan became interested in history at an early age, perhaps from his love of "Shoot em' Ups" -- movie westerns and television shows. Over the years, as an avid historian, he has amassed a very respectable library, but he also has other hobbies that include traveling to state and national parks and he enjoys visiting obscure historical sites. When at home, Dan regularly gives presentations about the Apaches.



Frank J. Brito for his book *Indians, Latinos, And Confederates, A Western Family: 1598-1973*.

Frank J. Brito is the grandson of lifelong Las Cruces citizen, Frank C. Brito. Frank C. Brito was a Roosevelt Rough Rider, Doña Ana County Deputy Sheriff, Las Cruces Constable, Volunteer Fireman and National Guardsman.

Frank J. Brito began his love of Southern New Mexico history through his uncle, Santiago Padilla Brito of Las Cruces. Santiago, a lifelong student of Mesilla Valley history, was the son of Frank C. Brito and the namesake and grandson of Grant County pioneer, Santiago Brito of Pinos Altos. Santiago encouraged his nephew's curiosity about their family and all Southwest history and became Frank's mentor. Including countless interviews, he bequeathed his collection of documents and photos to Frank with the promise that they be organized and published for other family members to enjoy. Frank believes he has fulfilled that promise with both a 100 page genealogy and this book.



Frank is a Northern California resident and a long-retired banker devoting nearly four decades to research and writing about the extended Brito Family and related Southwest events. He is a graduate of Saint Mary's College of California with a background in accounting and finance.

Hall of Fame Award

The Hall of Fame Award is designed to recognize an individual who is known for their exceptional contribution to the preservation of the history and culture of the Mesilla Valley.

Pat Taylor has worked on the preservation of earthen buildings and historic structures using traditional materials and preservation practices for the past 35 years. Twenty of which were spent with Cornerstones Community Partnerships, a non-profit organization working with communities to restore historic structures. Locally he's worked on the restoration of the Doña Ana Church and the Armijo Gallagher Home along with numerous buildings in the Mesilla Valley and El Paso areas. In addition, he has worked on regional and international projects including the Presidio Officers Quarters in San Francisco and the Mission San Miguel



near Paso Robles, Cal. as well as several preservation projects in Chile with Fundación Altiplano. He has been involved with a 30-year collaborative series of bi-national workshops with Mexico and the US along the frontera. Although he is now officially retired, he continues to work as a consultant in the field of preservation. He has recently begun organizing and running workshops in Mesilla to repair and preserve adobe structures within the community and to provide hands on opportunities for learning adobe restoration techniques.

Consuelo R. Lerma was a homegrown advocate for her community. In 1999, at the age of 81, she became the catalyst and founder of Las Esperanzas, Inc. a nonprofit grassroots organization. Its mission is the preservation of the Mesquite Historic District and the original town site of Las Cruces.

The organization continues to thrive today with improvements and renovations continuing in the district. It has become a model neighborhood association. Also, she worked closely with the Dona County Extension Agency and New Mexico State University, HELP Home Education Livelyhood Program, using her bilingual fluency to teach migrant women to be self-sustaining.



Consuelo was born in Las Cruces just five years after New Mexico achieved statehood, and counts six generations here. During her lifetime (1917-2004) she was honored numerous times. She was Citizen of the Year 2004 as selected by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, given the Border Books Festival "Ayer y el Futuro Award", and publicly recognized by the mayor and city council of Las Cruces for her contributions to the community. She received a state flag from the New Mexico governor for her community advocacy.

Heritage Award

The Heritage Award is given to a person or persons whose actions or deeds have contributed to the historical or cultural heritage of Doña Ana County and who is (are) not professional or a vocational historian.



Joe B. Armstrong is an 86-year-old active horseman and stockman. At age 21, he received his AQHA Judge's Card with the privilege of being able to "judge any size show". His entire life has been spent with people, and livestock. His enjoyment is in helping people who need and want to be helped.

In *Horseman's Handbook*, drawing on seven decades of professional experience gathered around the world as an international judge, educator, breeder, coach, consultant and competitor, Joe shares his lifelong passion and knowledge of horses in a practical and concise manner accessible to readers of all experience levels.

Joe is a NMSU College of Agriculture Professor Emeritus and has been recognized for his contributions to the horse industry as a DQHA Hall of Fame Honoree, New Mexico 4-H Hall of Fame Honoree, New Mexico FFA Honorary State Farmer, and NMQHA Man of the Year. His life and distinguished career was featured in *Western Horseman* magazine in September 2018.

The Gemoets Prize

This \$100 prize is awarded to the author of the "Outstanding Article" in the current issue of the Southern New Mexico Historical Review as determined by the Editor.



Elisa Sanchez earned a B.A. and M.A. from Western New Mexico University (commencement speaker 1998) and an M.P.A. from Baruch College, City University of New York which she earned through the National Urban Fellows program. She was a public school teacher, community organizer in the south in the 60's, executive director of El Grito Headstart, coordinator of Border Economic Development and International Trade with County of San Diego, president and CEO of MANA, a national Latina organization.

She has served on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America Board of Directors and represented PPFA on the Alan Guttmacher Board of Directors. Have served on several national boards. In 1996 and again in 1998, *Hispanic Business Magazine* named her one of the 100 "Most Influential Hispanics in the U.S." In 1997, at the 20th Anniversary Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Gala, she was awarded the Medallion of Excellence in leadership. In 1998, WNMU named her an Outstanding Distinguished Alumna.

The Hiram Hadley Prize

This \$100 prize is awarded to the author of the “outstanding article on pioneer history” in the Southern New Mexico Historical Review as determined by the Editor.



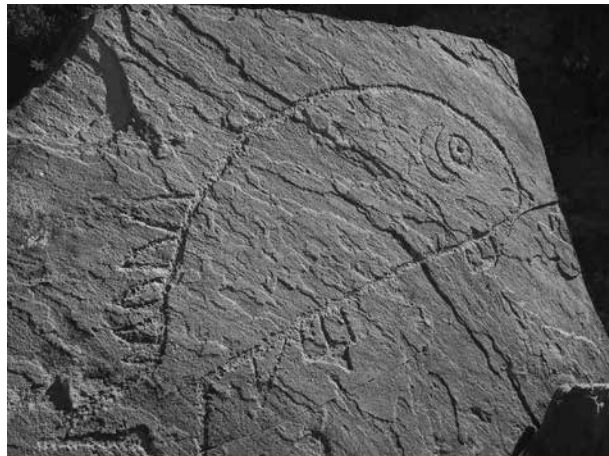
Christopher Schurtz is a New Mexico historian who focuses on the history of Las Cruces and the Mesilla Valley. A former reporter for the *Las Cruces Sun-News*, Schurtz wrote dozens of articles about local history, and in 2012, he produced the coffee table book *Historic Las Cruces* for the Branigan Museum Foundation. Schurtz has a master’s degree in history from NMSU and has helped develop several exhibits for local museums. Since 2016, he has taught courses in U.S. history, public history, and military history at NMSU and El Paso Community College.

His article “The Unique Legacy of Abraham Lincoln” was published in the 2010 edition of the *Southern New Mexico Historical Review*, and in 2009 DACHS awarded the Gemoets Award to him and co-author Cameron Saffell for their article on the Shalam Colony and its contribution to New Mexico agriculture. He is also the vice president of the Remember Bataan Foundation.

Old Timer’s Award

This award identifies a cherished object, a natural phenomenon or a cultural tradition prominent in the heritage of the Mesilla Valley deserving of public attention and recognition as an important part of the physical character of this region.

Native American Petroglyphs on Tonuco Mtn. These images are believed to be Mogollon and date back to 1200 to 1300 A.D. There are both abstract and representational images on the panels.



Building With Historical Significance

This designation can be applied to a property, including a district, a building, or structure, or an object, which is at least fifty years old associated with a significant historic event or person and / or incorporation within the property of historic characteristics of a period of time.

The Women's Improvement Association Clubhouse at 340 N. Raymond

According to Madeleine Vessels, Opal Priestly once wrote, "Name almost any element that makes life richer in Doña Ana County and it will have begun with the Women's Improvement Association."

According to Wikipedia, members of the organization worked to improve the community in tangible ways, as well as advocating for social change, such as in their support of women's suffrage. By 1902, there were 11 members.

The WIA bought the city's first hearse so that the dead could "go to the grave site with dignity." The group also bought a sprinkler to fight the dust on dirt roads and installed drinking fountains for animals. WIA obtained the title to land in 1896 that they would later make into a park. In 1898 WIA created Union Park, which was later known as Pioneer Women's Park. According to the city of Las Cruces, the first library in town was a collection of 500 books that the (WIA) kept at various member's homes and then in a small office they had on Water Street. In 1927, 33 years after the WIA was founded, when the WIA Club House was built, the books were moved there. Members took turns to act as librarian. It was the forerunner to the Thomas Branigan Memorial Library.

The building currently belongs to the city of Las Cruces.



Photo courtesy of the NMSU Archives and Special Collections. Date unknown.

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The Old Fairacres School, 3995 West Picacho Ave.

The *Las Cruces Sun-News* ran a photo on Oct. 24, 1999 showing the third, fourth and fifth grade students attending the old Fairacres elementary school. They were identified as the class of 1925-1926. There were 31 children and one teacher in the photo. In 1925 a new school, the one presently used in Fairacres, was built less than a quarter of a mile to the west.

The school was built in 1920 so it wasn't used very long. Various owners took over the property after 1925. One photo shows a filling station just east of the old school - on the area old timers might remember as Guacamole's restaurant. Also behind the school, rooms for a motor court were built. The building now is part of the Elephant Ranch Bar. Remarkably the building still has the same look that it had in the early 1920's.

According to Sally Kading, in the 1920's, the main street of Fairacres consisted of a tourist court, two stores, two cafes, three filling stations, the post office and the grade school.



Although the old school building is now part of the Elephant Ranch bar, the exterior retains its appearance from the 1920s. The windows, door and parapet are the same. In fact, looking through the windows, it is quite evident the glass is wavy and old. The flooring inside is also original although the space has been divided up. At right is a strip of patched flooring where a divider or wall once stood near the entrance. Photos by Jim Eckles



The Doña Ana County Historical Society (DACHS) was founded in 1963 to encourage and foster a better understanding of the County's far reaching history for future generations. Emphasizing research, education, and preservation, the society encourages a greater appreciation of New Mexico history, especially that of Doña Ana County.

Founding Members

John Altshool, Betty Bowen, Helen Caffey, Laiten Camien, Martin Campbell, Ira Clark, George Adlai Feather, Louis Freudenthal, Dorothy Mechem, Hugh Milton, Thomas Mitman, Helen Shomer, David Streeter, J. Paul Taylor, and Mark Thompson

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