

NEW MEXICO JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION COMMISSION
ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF FIVE NEW MEMBERS

SANTA FE, NM – The **New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC)** has announced the appointments of **Barbara Castillo-Velarde** of Raton, **Avilio Chavez** of Los Lunas, **Phyllis A. Dominguez** of Corrales, **Leonila Durán Serna** of Taos, and **Regis Pecos** of Cochiti as new members. The Commission was established by the Supreme Court of New Mexico in 1997 to improve the performance of New Mexico's judges and provide useful, credible information to voters on judges standing for retention elections.

Castillo-Velarde is an active community volunteer at the Miners Colfax Medical Center Hospital Auxiliary, the St. Vincent De Paul Food Pantry, and the St. Patrick's/St. Joseph's Second Grade Catechism Education Program. She retired this year after completing more than 31 years in county government. She served as Colfax County clerk for 16 years, chief deputy county clerk for 10 years, deputy assessor for three years and deputy clerk for more than two years. Castillo-Velarde was the first Hispanic woman in New Mexico elected as president of the New Mexico Association of Counties and served on the board of directors for 10 years.

Chavez, who was born in Belen and raised in Los Lunas, has been teaching for 23 years and coached football and track for 19 years. He currently teaches at Los Lunas High School and previously served as head football coach at Belen High School and Los Lunas High School for a total of 10 years. Chavez is also the owner and operator of a small business.

While serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Chavez received a meritorious promotion for outstanding performance. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in education from New Mexico Highlands University.

Dominguez is a prosecuting attorney in the felony domestic violence division for the Second Judicial District. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education as well as a law degree from the University of New Mexico. Previously, she held teaching positions in the Albuquerque and Grants/Cibola public school systems. She has served as chair of the Character Counts! Program and of the Mt. Taylor Jr. Quadrathlon Committee in Grants. She is a former member of the Excellence in Education Committee in Grants, and a former member of the International Reading Association.

Durán Serna, a native of Taos, has held leadership positions in education for 15 years. She was previously Superintendent of the Taos Public School system. As director of bilingual education, she received the Joseph Montoya Award. Currently, she is the reading coach and language therapist for the Taos Day School. Durán Serna earned Bachelor of Arts and Master's degrees in education from New Mexico Highlands University. She has been an active member of the National Dyslexia Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Southwest Educational

Development Lab (where she served as Chairman of the Board) and the International Reading Association. She has also been a member of several local civic organizations.

Pecos, a dedicated educator and public servant for more than 30 years, is co-founder and co-director of the New Mexico Leadership Institute. He is a member of the Cochiti Pueblo Tribal Council, and previously served as Governor. Pecos was formerly chief executive director of the New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs, chair of the board of Santa Fe Indian School, and director of research for Americans for Indian Opportunity as well as director of the National Bilingual Education Center at the University of New Mexico. He is the recipient of numerous leadership, public service, and recognition awards. He is currently pursuing a doctorate from the University of California-Berkeley and holds an undergraduate degree, with honors, from Princeton University.

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission is comprised of 15 individuals – seven lawyers and eight non-lawyers, who are appointed by the Supreme Court to staggered terms. Members are selected from nominations made by the Governor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Speaker of the House, Senate President Pro Tem, House Minority Leader, Senate Minority Leader and President of the State Bar. The Commission must be broadly representative of the state, geographically, politically and otherwise.

For more information about the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission, interested individuals may call **Louise Baca-Sena, Project Manager**, at **(505) 827-4960**, email <mailto:aoclmb@nmcourts.com> or visit the Commission's website at www.nmjpec.org.