

**FOR – Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 6, 2009**

**NEW MEXICO JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION COMMISSION
ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF THREE NEW MEMBERS**

SANTA FE—The **New Mexico Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC)** announced the appointment of **Karen Ogden Cortese** of Fort Sumner, **Patrick S. Freeman** of Truth or Consequences and **Denise M. Torres** of Las Cruces 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.

Cortese is co-owner of CC, Inc. a farming and ranching entity, as well as Cortese Family Properties, LP. In addition to ownership of the family businesses, she has been a substitute teacher for the Fort Sumner School System since 1988.

She earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from New Mexico State University in 1974 and an Associate's degree in Office Administration from NMSU in 1972.

Cortese volunteers with the Friends of the Bosque Redondo Memorial, the local Powderhorn CowBelles, and the Fort Sumner High School Football Parent's Club. She has received the Fort Sumner High School Honorary Fox Award. She also serves on various church committees and performs with the "Not So Andrews Sisters" singing group.

Freeman is general manager of Lordsburg Mining Company, which specializes in gold and silver mine and mill development in Hidalgo and Grant Counties. He previously was president of St. Cloud Mining Company and a senior geologist at Texasgulf, Inc.

Freeman has been a member of the Society of Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration since 1970 and was a member of the New Mexico Mining Commission of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Dept where he served on the Director's Advisory Board.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geology at Monmouth College in 1968 and has been a Certified Professional Geological Scientist of the American Institute of Professional Geologists since 1984.

He currently serves as a Citizen's Review Board member for the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department in Sierra County and previously was a board member of Sierra Vista Hospital and Sierra County Chamber of Commerce.

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Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission Announces Appointment of Three Members—2

Torres was admitted to the New Mexico Bar in 1993 and was subsequently elected a partner of the legal firm, Saenz & Torres, which limits its practice to personal injury, wrongful death and medical malpractice.

A native New Mexican from Truth or Consequences, Torres was a Presidential Scholar and earned an undergraduate degree from the University of New Mexico Anderson Schools of Management in 1989. As a National Hispanic Scholar, she earned a *Juris Doctor* degree from the University of New Mexico in 1993, graduating with honors in clinical law.

One of the American Trial Lawyers Association's Top 100 Trial Lawyers in New Mexico, Torres is President of the New Mexico Trial Lawyers Association Board of Directors and was selected by peers for inclusion in the 25th anniversary edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* in the specialties of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Personal Injury Litigation.

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 Tempore*, House Minority Leader, Senate Minority Leader and President of the State Bar.

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