



THE OFFICIAL RING

OF NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

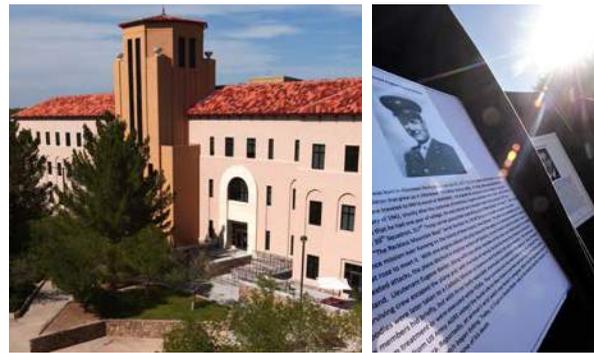
MAY 9, 2018

The Official New Mexico State University Ring is an emblematic representation of our unique University. The triangles on the face of the ring, surrounded by our University name, represent the three functions of our land-grant University – teaching, research and service. They also represent the joining of multiple cultures in New Mexico and the triangulation of campus with Interstate 10 joining Interstate 25 in the first principle interchange – the Pan American Highway in North America.

One side of the ring displays Memorial Tower in honor of the Aggies who died serving our country. The opposite side features the majestic Organ Mountains, accented by our iconic 'A' Mountain.

Current students should wear the ring with the University's name facing them, which means the ring is facing the heart. Following the granting of degrees at Commencement, graduates turn the ring around, with the name facing outward, signifying that the graduate is now ready to face the world.

The New Mexico State University Alumni Association congratulates you for your perseverance and commitment toward earning a degree from New Mexico State University.



Photographs courtesy Hobson-Huntsinger University Archives, University Communications, Darren Phillips and Balfour. Text by Martha Shipman Andrews.

STAY CONNECTED!

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MEMORIAL TOWER

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

"This afternoon, I half-believed that I cried...The names of those deceased and injured were just names until I came to the names of those that I knew intimately. I suppose that I feel it so badly because I spent the best years that I've known so far down there at Aggies [NMSU] and all the men I knew were an integral part of that memory. What can we do to really keep them with us?"

Lt. Col. Bernard C. Kaplan '42 to
Dean of Engineering Daniel B. Jett
November 1944



Era Rentfrow, NMCA & MA Registrar, 1922-1962

As early as January 1942, members of the then New Mexico State College community had discussed building a war memorial for the school. Dean of Students William O'Donnell appointed a planning committee whose members included Professor W. Earl Beem, School Registrar Era Rentfrow, the sitting editor of *The Round Up* and the president of the Student Commission. Early on, funds were donated to the committee – the first donation coming from the parents of pilot Henry Gilbert '41, who had lost his life over Burma in December 1941 – but these initial contributions were invested in war bonds.

At the war's end, the newly constituted Aggie Memorial Committee began fundraising with the goal of raising \$165,000 for a memorial stadium – a memorial that would pay tribute to the sacrifices of the past but also serve the living community. The stadium design featured a memorial tower attached to the west side of the stadium. Within the tower, a memorial room would house the pictures, plaques and records of Aggies who had perished during the war. Ms. Rentfrow had dedicated herself to documenting the histories of those who lost their lives in service to the country, as well as the nearly 3,000 other Aggie men and women serving in every branch of the military. The clippings, photographs and correspondence she collected and preserved in scrapbooks remain



today a tangible and moving reminder of NMSU's significant contributions to the war effort.

The tower also provided practical services for the stadium and the campus community. It housed a set of carillon bells and an amplifying system for the stadium, as well as two press boxes – the upper for radio and the lower for newspaper and publicity personnel. The not-yet completed stadium was nonetheless dedicated September 15, 1950, in a ceremony preceding a football game between the then New Mexico Aggies and the Hardin Simmons Cowboys. Construction on the building continued until 1954.

By 1977, concern over safety issues and the athletic department's ambition to improve its standing in its athletic conference led to the need for a state-of-the-art sports facility away from the heart of campus. The press boxes attached to Memorial Tower had been closed for structural instability and the capacity of the old stadium would be more than doubled in this new location.

After the new stadium's construction in 1978, the old stadium was dismantled, leaving a partially closed Memorial Tower to

become the site of a mid-campus snack bar and a second floor dining area called the "Flamingo Room." Students perpetuated gothic tales of mummies and ghosts inhabiting the abandoned three upper floors of the tower.

In 2003, plans were finalized to build a College of Health and Social Services on the site of the old stadium, incorporating the Memorial Tower. The bleachers attached to the tower were demolished and the interior of the tower gutted for a complete stabilization and renovation.

The commemorative photographs of the fallen Aggies were reinstalled on the first floor of the tower, and during NMSU's 2012 Homecoming, the inaugural Celebration of Traditions was held at Memorial Tower during NMSU's Homecoming – recognizing all Aggie veterans, paying special tribute to NMSU students who gave their lives serving our country.

The image of Memorial Tower appears on the NMSU official ring. Every May and December, the building is opened for the traditional NMSU Ring Ceremony.



Official NMSU rings begin their journey to the Ring Ceremony atop Memorial Tower the night before the event. The next day, Pistol Pete takes the rings to the ceremony on horseback.



At the conclusion of the ceremony, recipients and their guests are invited to explore Memorial Tower. While at the top of the tower, recipients are encouraged to write about their ring experience and what it means to them.