

Today, Representatives Ben Ray Luján, Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague remembered Governor Bruce King in speeches on the House floor. Governor King, a former three term governor, passed away on November 13 at the age of 85.

Below are Rep. Lujan's remarks as prepared for delivery:

Today, I join my friends Martin Heinrich and Harry Teague to celebrate the life of Bruce King.

For so long, Governor King has been a constant and warming presence in New Mexico—dedicating himself to our state and touching the lives of New Mexicans from border to border with his kind words, hearty laugh and friendly drawl

It's tough to go far in New Mexico without talking to someone who has a story about Governor King, and I'm no different. When I turned one, Governor King sent my parents silver cup from himself and Ms. King that still holds a prominent place in my mom and dad's house. It's a practice he followed just to let people know that he cared and that they were in his thoughts—even as he presided over a growing and emerging state.

I'm sure there are silver cups and similar stories throughout New Mexico – memories sitting on mantles and stories retold around family dinner tables.

His thoughtfulness and down home way of reaching out to the people of our state made him a legend.

Raised in the fields of New Mexico and instilled with a sense of value in public service and a kindness toward all, Governor King went to work early in life for our country and our state. He served in the Army in World War II and, when he came home, he settled at the family ranch in Stanley.

He was always a rancher and a genuine cowboy above all. And the values he learned on the ranch guided his service in our state.

Governor King used to say that when cowboys came through the ranch to water their stock, his parents never asked if they were Republican or Democrat and he took this lesson to heart - working across the aisle in his time as a county commissioner, state legislator, speaker of the house and finally as our Governor.

When he got a question about a tough piece of legislation or a tough issue, his approach to bipartisanship was highlighted by his wit.

"Well, some of my friends are for it," he would say. And then he'd continue, "Some of my friends are against it, and I always support my friends."

This steady and collaborative approach to governance led to many accomplishments that were only overshadowed by the strength of Governor King's character and the size of his heart.

With the helpful guidance of his wife Alice, he made the Children, Youth and Families Department a new state agency to look out for New Mexico's children. And he made sure that students statewide had access to kindergarten and that their schools had steady funding, no matter if they lived in a growing city or on a quiet farm. He valued the land and made sure it was protected through an environmental improvement agency. And his common sense approach to finances led to the creation of the state's rainy day fund and the mineral trust.

Governor King's accomplishments were many, but his legacy will be shaped his deep affection for our state and his ability to connect with New Mexicans.

He remembered names and family members, asking about a mother, daughter or cousin many years after his first meeting.

When he walked into a general store, a local restaurant or a farmhouse, he'd extend his hand to everyone and ask, "How y'all?" When they returned the question, he'd answered, "Mighty fine," before starting a friendly conversation.

Governor King's words and deeds will long echo in our state.

For generations, people will remember Governor King's legacy and benefit from his work. And I hope that New Mexicans will heed his most important lessons and take some time to talk to their neighbors, help their communities and give a little back to our state.

And if we do this--if we all work a little harder, with a little more compassion and a little more common sense, when someone asks you how you're doing, we'll all be able to answer, "Mighty fine."