



Taking On Giants: Fabian Chavez Jr. and New Mexico Politics

David Roybal

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Twelve-year-old Fabian Chavez Jr. grabbed a small cardboard suitcase and a few packaged snacks before hitchhiking 1,300 miles across two state lines. His parents in Santa Fe didn't learn of his intentions--or his whereabouts--until he was already midway through his journey to the Hollywood that had captured his imagination.

Although his childhood antics suggested he might end up serving time rather than the public, Chavez ultimately dedicated thirty years to a variety of state posts in New Mexico, blazing new trails into civil rights, education, business, government, and politics. Chavez was instrumental in the creation of the University of New Mexico's medical school, pushed legislation that would reform the state's notoriously corrupt liquor laws, and promoted New Mexico tourism.

David Roybal's examination of the life and accomplishments of the reform-minded Democrat also explores the broader political history of New Mexico over the last half of the twentieth century. Roybal surveys the back room deals, the trade offs, and the rise of such governors as Bruce King, Jerry Apodaca, and Toney Anaya to create a work that deftly portrays New Mexico's fractious and complicated recent political history.

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