

**NEW MEXICO
ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**



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NMAA RECOGNIZES 2021 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Albuquerque, N.M. – The New Mexico Activities Association Distinguished Service Award is given annually at the NMAA & NMADA Fall Leadership Conference. The individuals receiving this award have all contributed significantly toward the good of the Association in one form or another. Each recipient has supported interscholastic activities for numerous years. The 2021 honorees are Mark Gallegos, Howie Morales, and Don Thompson.

Mark Gallegos spent 33 years in education as a teacher, coach, and athletic director. He started out as a social studies teacher at Santa Teresa Jr. High School and then coached and taught in Portales, Alamogordo, and then a return trip to Portales. During his career he coached football, basketball and track & field. He was the head boys' basketball coach at Portales from 1998-2012. In that time, he won a state title and eight district championships. At the end of the 2012 school year, he moved into the Athletic Director's position at Portales High School. The 1982 graduate of Santa Rosa High School and Eastern New Mexico alum retired from the Portales Schools in June of 2021 and has been a valuable asset to the NMAA throughout his career in education.

Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales, raised in Silver City, New Mexico, has spent his whole life working to improve the lives of people in his community and across our state. He served in the New Mexico Legislature on the Legislative Finance Committee for 11 years. The first in his family to go to college, Howie attended Western New Mexico University and went on to earn a PhD in education from NMSU. Howie taught students in special education in the Silver City and Cobre School Districts. He coached local high school baseball teams to state championships, and is the longest serving volunteer of Big Brothers/Big Sisters in New Mexico. Since 2008, Howie has been an aggressive leader for children and classrooms in both the State Senate and as Lieutenant Governor. He is a true champion of the value of interscholastic activities in our state.

An engineering graduate from the University of Oklahoma, Don has been involved in his community in many ways. Don has served as a board member and youth committee chair with the local Central New Mexico United States Bowling Congress. He's coached youth leagues at Kirtland Air Force Base and Holiday Bowl, along with leading the bowling programs at both Eldorado and Rio Rancho High Schools. In 2010, Don was elected president of the New Mexico High School Bowling Association and has served as the tournament and event director for all NMAA State Bowling Championships since bowling's inception as a sanctioned activity. He has also created program that has provided over \$142,000 in scholarship money to students since 2010.

Mr. Gallegos, Lt. Gov. Morales, and Mr. Thompson were all recognized with commemorative plaques during the NMAA & NMADA Fall Leadership Conference Lunch Banquet that was held on September 27th. Their service to the NMAA and the youth of New Mexico is greatly appreciated.

For additional information pertaining to this release, please contact Dusty Young, NMAA Associate Director, at (505) 977-5385 or dusty@nmact.org.