



Odis Echols

May 28, 1930 - March 28, 2013

ECHOLS, ODIS L. JR. You don't become a legend without a colorful personality, an outsized ego and an instinct for making the right move at the right time. Former State Senator and veteran lobbyist, Odis Echols, had all that and then some. Odis Echols passed in Albuquerque, NM, Thursday March 28, 2013, at the age of 82 after a long and valiant battle with Dementia. Odis was born May 28, 1930. He was a native New Mexican. He grew up in Clovis, NM and would later proudly be called, "Odis from Clovis." Odis graduated from Texas Tech University in 1954 with a BS in Education. He was elected Senior Class President and was a Kappa Sigma member. His father, Odis "Pop" Echols bought KCLV Radio station in Clovis, NM. It was at that radio station where he and his father would produce music shows and promote musicians from across the country including Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, Glen Campbell, Faron Young and Tommy Sands. Odis had unlimited stories depicting his youth as a fun and amazing ride in the presence of so many famous people. He was elected President of the New Mexico Broadcasters Association in 1962. Odis was elected to the New Mexico State Senate from Curry County in 1966. He served ten years. During his tenure, he served as Senate Majority Whip and as Chairman of Senate Rules Committee. He was a member of Senate Finance Committee and other interim Committees. He was chosen one of America's Outstanding Legislators by Rutgers University in 1975. Odis was a maverick Legislator who worked to pass several controversial laws concerning marijuana and privacy standards.

He was also an early proponent of a “bullet train” between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. In the late 70’s he began lobbying and is credited with popularizing the trend of taking on multiple clients. Before he was done, his client list was the length of your arm including Bernalillo County, United New Mexico Bank, Sandia Pueblo and many others. Two of his greatest achievements in lobbying were working to help the passage of interstate banking in the mid 1980’s and Indian Gaming in the early 1990’s. Odis also served as Chairman of the New Mexico State Fair Board under Governor Toney Anaya. Longtime lobbyist Scott Scanland, who began his career with Echols, said Odis Echols will be remembered as a dean of the New Mexico lobbying corps who paved the way for me and many others. In his post-lobbying days, Odis encouraged his wife Millie to become a World Champion in County Western Dance and was so proud when she won in 2005. The last 15 years of his life were filled with dance competitions, dance rehearsals and music. Chip Hindi made Odis an Honorary Dance Spectator because we all knew he was a yank and cranker on the dance floor. Odis had unlimited stories and told them freely to anyone who would listen. He could talk for hours and knew a lot about many things and a little about everything. Odis was giving to so many people. He loved good food. He loved good music. He loved to see others succeed. He loved to hob-nob with the rich and famous and had a hand in bringing together talented people to eager producers. Odis was bigger than life! Pallbearers are Turner Branch, Ambassador Ed Romero, Greg Frost, Senator Les Houston, Joe O’Neil and Scott Scanland. Honorary Pallbearers are New Mexico State Senate Members; Former Governor Bill Richardson, Former Governor Gary Johnson, Former Governor Toney Anaya, Former Governor Garrey Carruthers, Former Governor Jerry Apodaca, and Former Governor Dave Cargo; New Mexico Broadcasters Association Past Presidents; The New Mexico Enchantment Dance family. He is survived by his wife, Millie Leahy. He also leaves behind a son, Dan Echols and two grandchildren, Courtney and Brandon Echols who reside in Scottsdale, Arizona. A Service will be held Thursday, April 4, 2013, 2:00 p.m. at FRENCH – Lomas. Life Celebration

gathering after funeral at Kelly's Brew Pub hosted by longtime friends Dennis and Janis Bonfontine. There will be an open microphone for everyone to share their favorite Odis stories.

Tribute Wall

TF

“ *The Theta-Zeta Chapter of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity at Eastern New Mexico University would like to send it's thoughts and prayers to the family of Odis L. Echols. As most people know, Odis was a Kappa Sigma initiate of the Epsilon-Phi Chapter at Texas Tech University. He was also the driving force in starting our Kappa Sigma Chapter at ENMU in 1962. Odis loved the fraternity and freely gave of his time and treasure to the chapter. He was a major donor in the building of our new chapter house in 1997 and a plaque in his honor is permanently placed at the entrance of the Chapter House. Odis will be missed by all of us. Richard Snodgrass, Grand Master Theta-Zeta Chapter*

Theta-Zeta Chapter of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity - April 05, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ *As a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, I met Odis during my undergraduate years while he was serving as our District Grand Master. Brother Echols loved the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and gave unselfishly of his time, talent and treasures. Odis was a great mentor and helped a countless number of young men get a start in life, me included. Thanks Brother! AEKDB John Bennett*

John Bennett - April 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

GB

“ *A GOOD FRIEND,AND A GOOD MAN..I WILL MISS HIM,AS YOU WILL....GOD BLESS*

GARY BENNETT - April 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ I still tell the story of "The Las Vegas Trip" when Odis figured out how to take 130 folks on a Frontier Airlines jet to the old Alladin Hotel for a week in Las Vegas. The only mandatory attendance was one evening to honor Pop. Odis, it was quite a ride.

Rodger Beimer - April 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

FE

“ Millie, I was very sad to hear about Odis' passing, our deepest condolences to you and your family.

Frances Elliott - April 04, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ I worked with Mr. Echols and Scott back in the 90's. I loved the two of them. What a kind gentleman Mr. Echols was. My sympathies to his family. God bless you, Mr. Echols.

Susy Golden - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ I worked for Pop and OJ as a DJ at KCLV for a short time in 1955 and was friends with OJ & Pat ever since. OJ & Pat were one of the sponsors who "watched" over our 1956 Senior Class Trip to Ruidoso. We stayed up all night in Ruidoso telling and listening to his stories and laughing our heads off. He was a great guy and I, for one; will miss him.

Mickey Simms - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

CN

“ I am a student of Millie's who never had the chance to meet Odis. I have heard wonderful things about him through Millie though. I am sorry for your loss. It sounds like he was a wonderful man.

Cari Neill - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

VB

“ To son Danny and his family, Virgil and I first knew Odis in Clovis in 1967. I knew you when you were a baby and you brought such joy to your Mom, Dad, and grandparents. To Millie and her son, God bless you for being a part of Odis' life, even when it got tough. I know you loved and cared for him even when he didn't remember. Our friendship with Odis went on for almost 46 years and what a friend Odis was! Bigger than life itself.... and bigger stories still. Love to you all, Virgil & Betty Beagles

Virgil & Betty Beagles - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ Odis was indeed a legend. It was my distinct pleasure to know him and work with him. I enjoyed hearing the stories and "tall tales" that he and my partner Larry Lamb would tell about growing up and living in Clovis. My condolences to his family; he was a good man who will be missed.

Jeffrey Dahl - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

SL

“ Our deepest condolences to the family. Our thoughts and prayers are with you in your time in need.

Sam, Martha, and Leticia Lamb - April 03, 2013 at 12:00 AM

BG

“ Odis and his family brought our family: Doris, Pam, Bobby, Debbie to Clovis and KCLV radio in November 1963. They played a major role in our lives and we treasure their friendship. Odis was a remarkable talent and man. Many a good thing that has happened in New Mexico can be traced back to him. He was an excellent state senator and state leader. Life has been better for a lot of people due to Odis Echols including this family.

bob gold - April 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM

TC

“ Hold on to your memories, and let them guide you during this time of sadness. With our deepest sympathy, Todd Lohman, Kim and Courtney

Todd Lohman, Kim and Courtney - April 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM

JL

“ May happy memories carry you through this sorrowful time. Odis and my daddy, M. D. Lohman, were dear friends. Daddy passed away on October 16, 2012. Wishing you and your family strength and peace. With our deepest sympathy and love, Michael, Terry, and Josh

Judge Michael Vigil, Terry Lohman-Vigil and Josh Lohman-Shainin - April 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ Memories of love and friendship are treasures to carry with you always. You're in my thoughts every step of the way. With sympathy and love, DeLores

DeLores Lohman - April 02, 2013 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ *On behalf of the French Family of Companies we want to express to you our deepest condolences.*

Dante Gutierrez-Zamora - April 01, 2013 at 12:00 AM