

# Man was teacher, agriculture expert

Associated Press

William P. "Bill" Stephens of Las Cruces, one of the state's most respected leaders in the field of agriculture and a former professor at New Mexico State University, died Thursday (Sept. 30, 1993). He was 73.

Arrangements are pending with Graham Mortuary in Las Cruces.

During his career, Stephens served as state secretary of Agriculture, was on the faculty at New Mexico State University and was a former executive director of the Farm and Ranch Heritage Institute.

Stephens was raised by his colleagues in education and agriculture.

Felicia Thal, chairwoman of the Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum, said Stephens was the motivating force in getting the money to construct the \$8 million museum, scheduled to be built next year at New Mexico State University.

"His dedication to this ideal and to this whole concept (of the museum) will be sorely missed," Thal said.

Stephens was a former professor of agricultural economics at NMSU. In 1972, he took the dual role of director of the Department of Agriculture and state secretary of Agriculture.

"He did a wonderful job," said John Owens, dean of NMSU's College of Agriculture and Home Economics. "He strengthened the department."

New Mexico State President James Halligan named Stephens a leading figure in the state's agriculture industry. Stephens was agriculture secretary when Halligan came to the university.

Halligan also praised Stephens' role in creating the farm and ranch heritage museum.

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