

## NEWS RELEASE

October 14, 2011  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Abe Villarreal  
Phone: 575.538.6336  
[news@wnmu.edu](mailto:news@wnmu.edu)



### **FORMER FGCU VICE-PRESIDENT SHEPARD INAUGURATED, RECEIVES MUSTANG STATUE DONATION**

Silver City, NM – Former Florida Gulf Coast University Vice-President Joseph Shepard was inaugurated as the fifteenth president of Western New Mexico University on October 7, 2011.

Many Florida-area family and friends attended the ceremony and a Mustang statue dedication in Silver City, New Mexico. The dedication marked the first of many activities on inauguration day.

Dick and Nancy Klaas of Naples, Florida, along with their sons, Ben and Brian, donated the Mustang statue to the WNMU campus and attended the event.

“It is a gift to the university and to Dr. Shepard,” said Mr. Klaas. “My wife and I thought it would be nice to give him something to start making his mark at the university.”

Mr. and Mrs. Klaas first met Dr. Shepard when he arrived at FGCU at the inception of the new university.

“I was associated with the folks that donated the land FGCU,” said Mr. Klaas. “Early on I got to know Joe and he was very responsible for the growth of FGCU.”

The Klaases contacted an artist in California who cast the Mustang statue for the WNMU donation. The statue is now named El Morado, meaning purple in Spanish, WNMU’s school color.

“This is an exciting and generous donation,” said Dr. Shepard. “It will provide a focal point for our campus, a sense of belonging for our students, and a symbol of this great university’s 118 year history. I am extremely grateful to the Klaas family for their generosity, thoughtfulness, and friendship.”

Dr. Shepard began his tenure at WNMU on July 5, 2011 after being selected by the WNMU’s Board of Regents on April 27 in a nationwide search. An institution of 3,300 students, WNMU offers 12 master degrees, 41 baccalaureate degrees, and 20 associate and certificate programs. Nationally accredited programs include nursing, education, social work, business, occupational therapy, and applied technology.

“Our first impression of WNMU is of the people we met and that they are really nice people,” said Mr. Klaas. “From that perspective, Joe will fit in perfectly well.”



***Pictured are Dr. Joseph Shepard, Marcela Shepard, Nancy Klaas and Dick Klaas.***

*Located in Silver City, New Mexico, Western New Mexico University has served the people of the state of New Mexico and its surrounding areas as a comprehensive, regional, rural, public coeducational university since 1893 and caters to a student body diverse in age, culture, language and ethnic background.*

###