



**ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE**  
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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Archdiocese / University of New Mexico Gift Agreement Signed**

#### **\$500,000 Kicks Off Archdiocesan Campaign to Fund UNM Endowed Chair in Roman Catholic Studies**

**ALBUQUERQUE - IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, June 26, 2007**

History was made today when Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan signed a gift agreement with the University of New Mexico establishing a permanent endowed Chair in Roman Catholic Studies, the first such chair at a secular university in the Southwest. The Archbishop presented UNM President David J. Schmidly with a check for \$500,000 kicking off the \$2.5 million Archdiocesan campaign to fully fund the Chair.

Archbishop Sheehan said:

*I am very happy that we are establishing a Chair in Roman Catholic Studies at the University of New Mexico”, said Archbishop Sheehan. “The Catholic Church arrived here in 1598 with the Spanish settlers and Friars and has been a major presence in New Mexico throughout the years.*

*We feel that the Roman Catholic Church’s history, spirituality and thought will make a valuable contribution to the educational experience of UNM students, preparing them for leadership in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Building on the experience of other secular universities who have done this in the past, we are proud to join with UNM to establish this first Chair in Roman Catholic Studies in the Southwest.*

*The Archbishop thanked major donors who have already made the initial \$500,000 gift possible. These include Larry and Dorothy Rainosek, owners of Frontier/Golden Pride restaurants as well as donors that wish to remain anonymous. A minimum of \$1.5 million needs to be raised to begin the search process for a Chair.*

The Archdiocese will be enlisting the support of additional donors who are committed to furthering knowledge of Roman Catholic thought, historical contributions and traditions in an academic setting. Dr. Dolly Sokol, Executive Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Development said, “We hope generous Catholics throughout New Mexico and beyond will be inspired by the vision of this Chair and will gift the Archdiocese with funds to ensure its success”.

**We invite you to visit our website**  
**<http://www.archdiocesasantafe.org>**