

## WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY

Dr. Gerald W. Thomas  
President  
New Mexico State University

Thank you very much, Carol (Ropp), and more thanks to you for your leadership in the community and in the state.

It's my pleasure to welcome you here, and I do say "welcome." Beyond that I want to make a few comments.

This is a time in our history when decisions about resources are critical. The main resources that we are concerned with are land, water, and energy. Energy is in the news, and in the short run energy will shape our lives more than any other resource--both the availability and cost of energy. Energy impacts on the decisions about other resources. It impacts on your daily life and the daily life of the University and the daily life of each individual here, including myself. So energy is in the news; energy is the resource that today requires more national and statewide attention than any other resource.

Beyond that, in looking into the future, say to the turn of the century, water will certainly become more and more critical. And water will be the most limiting resource, in my opinion, beyond the next two or three decades, as, hopefully, we find more and more answers to the energy problem.

Good land is also still critical--decisions about land use and land management. We are still losing about a million and a half acres of prime land from agricultural production each year in the United States. Indeed, we are all concerned about land and we are concerned about energy. But the concerns about water in the long run may be more important than either of these other two resource decisions.

In approaching decisions about any of these resources, I keep reminding audiences that the proper steps in the process should be: first, research, to examine alternative solutions; secondly, education, to help evaluate and make decisions about these problems and the possible solutions; and ultimately, corrective legislation. When research and education fail then legislation may be the only answer.

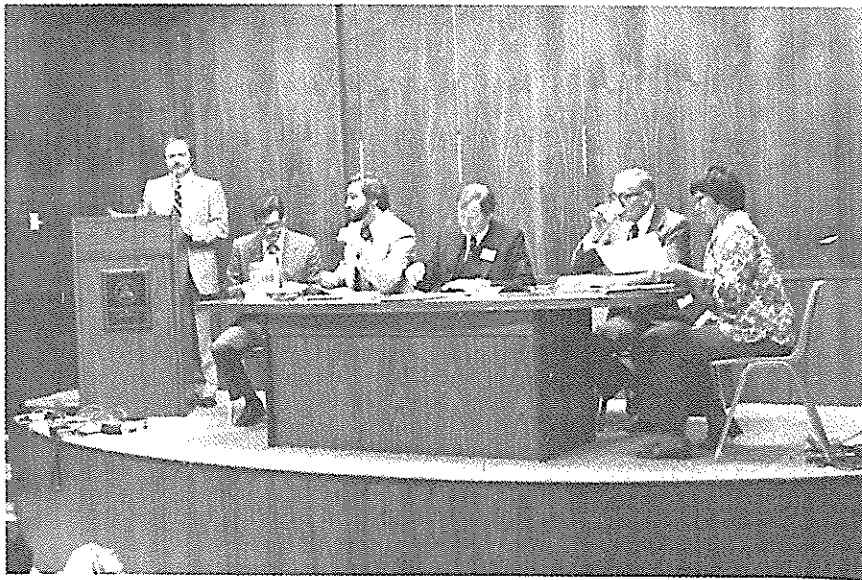
We are dealing now with legislation that relates to national water policy; we are dealing with legislation that relates to state water policy. Now that some legislation is in place and new legislation is being planned, it's up to us to evaluate this legislation as it relates to this important resource.

We are fortunate in New Mexico to have excellent leadership as far as water is concerned. Steve Reynolds is not only a state authority, but he goes far beyond the limits of the state. He is "listened to" on a

national basis; he speaks from experience; he speaks from a knowledgeable base. We are fortunate to have him in the state of New Mexico.

Closely allied with Steve and other individuals in the state, of course, is the leadership in Texas. For several years I was associated with the West Texas Water Institute and I know that Texas has long been concerned about water resources. Overlapping the two states we have Jess Gilmer. Jess keeps us all informed. I guess many of you get the stacks of information from his copy machine and all the comments and notes that he sends. Jess is not trying to get into controversy; he's right in the middle of it all the time. But behind that, he represents a position for us in the Rio Grande Valley, a good position relating to joint problems in Texas and New Mexico. So we have, not only these two, individuals, but many other individuals in the state that speak with knowledge about the water resource. We are fortunate to have good leadership from Governor King's office and I'm pleased that Jim King will be here to represent the Governor and make some comments about that a little bit later.

I do welcome you to this conference. The discussions today hopefully will lead to answers to some of the critical issues about water.



#### Morning Speakers

(From left) Thomas G. Bahr, Gerald W. Thomas, Jim King, Gerald Seinwill, Steve E. Reynolds, and Jo Carol Ropp