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Press Release from the Board of County Commissioners

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE March 16, 2021

Commission Approves Proclamation Honoring Daniel T. “Bud” Kelly Jr.

SANTA FE, NM – At the March 9, 2021 Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting, Commissioner Anna Hansen (D-2) introduced a [proclamation](#) honoring the late Daniel T. “Bud” Kelly Jr. for his service to our country and the indelible impact he had on Santa Fe County and its citizens and proclaiming March 22nd as Daniel T. “Bud” Kelly Jr. Day.

The proclamation highlights Bud’s life as a Santa Fe native and son of Margaret Gross and Daniel T. Kelly Sr., a prominent and historically significant family that owned and operated Gross Kelly & Company, a pioneering wholesale and retail mercantile company synonymous with the development of Southwest.

Bud built upon his family’s legacy and commitment to civic responsibility by not only serving his country in World War II and Korea and graduating from Harvard University, but by returning to Santa Fe to help establish and grow many of Santa Fe County’s most beloved institutions and organizations. His civic contributions earned him recognition as a Santa Fe Living Treasure in 2005.

Bud served as president of the Gross Kelly & Company until it was sold in the 1950s. He then partnered with Howell Ernest Insurance Company and eventually took full ownership of the Kelly Insurance Company in 1965 and remained at the helm until his retirement in the early 1980s.

An active member of the Santa Fe business community, he served as a founding board member for St. John’s College, Santa Fe Preparatory School, and the Santa Fe Opera; director of the First National Bank and president of the School of American Research (SAR).

Bud passed away on August 18, 2020, at age 99. This proclamation honors Bud by designating what would have been his 100th birthday – March 22 – as “Daniel T. ‘Bud’ Kelly Jr. Day.”

During the presentation of the proclamation Commissioner Hansen said:

“As a friend of the Kelly family and Commissioner of District 2, I feel really grateful to be able to recognize Bud Kelly for his many accomplishments and contributions to our community. I think it is really important to recognize our elders and people who have contributed to make Santa Fe what it is today. Bud Kelly is one of those people who has done so much to help shape this City and County and New Mexico.”

All four of Mr. Kelly’s children and one of his many nephews attended the virtual meeting and spoke of their deep love for their father and appreciation to the Commission for the proclamation.

Thomas Kelly: “My heart is full. My father practiced a very devoted love for New Mexico. As a historian, he brought many special things to the table. I’m extremely honored to have him recognized on March 22nd and what would have been his 100th birthday. We all miss him and hold him in our hearts.”

Robert Kelly: “We are so touched as a family. I’m sure dad would be extraordinarily flattered and somewhat humbled by this. He would say it takes a village and all of you have certainly contributed to this. Our great grandfather, Harry W. Kelly was in fact hired by Miguel Otero Sr. whose son, Miguel Otero II, became the first territorial Governor of New Mexico. This is a great sweep of history – it’s extraordinary that NM is in fact the reason for the Kelly’s being here. Very sweet that this day is proclaimed in Dad’s honor.”

Susan Kelly: “It has been a pleasure working with Anna on the proclamation for the last six months. Thank you for bestowing this day in recognition of my sweet father. I was thinking back – I am the eldest of the four [kids] and I knew Bud as “daddy” and I have found out even more during the last six months what a unique human being he was and all of the incredible things he did for us as a family but also us as a city and state. I appreciate you for honoring him on 100th birthday, his special day.”

Pamela Kelly: “Being the youngest there’s always a desire to say ‘Ditto.’ Dad instilled in all of us a love for NM and a deep respect for the state and sense responsibility to give back. All of us in our way, our love for our father and for the community that he allowed us to be part of, we have great respect for and take our responsibility to give back very seriously. Thank you very much for this incredibly generous and thoughtful gestures. Dad would be flattered but probably also a little embarrassed by all the attention.”

Robert H. “Berto” Gorham III: “I am one of Bud’s many nephew and I want to say thank you to all the Commissioners and vaya con dios padrino.”

Commissioner Hansen moved to approved the proclamation and all three Commissioners attempted to second the motion at once. The vote on the proclamation was passed unanimously.

Please contact Commissioner Anna Hansen at 505-920-0957 or ahansen@santafecountynm.gov for more information.

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For additional information, please contact Commissioner Anna Hansen at ahansen@santafecountynm.gov or 505-920-0957.