

Governor appoints two UNM regents

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Albuquerque – Gov. Susana Martinez has named two appointments to the board of regents overseeing The University of New Mexico. Long-time regent Jamie Koch was reappointed to the board, along with newcomer Marron Lee, an attorney with strong family ties to UNM.

Koch was already reappointed by the governor previously, but resigned in the confirmation process during the recently completed legislative session. The former Democratic Party chair was unanimously confirmed by the Senate, but resigned as another appointee was not confirmed. Martinez pointed to Koch's strong leadership in financial oversight as a key reason for reappointing him.

"Regent Koch is an experienced and talented leader, and I firmly believe that he will be a strong servant on the university's governing board as they seek to increase our graduation rate and prepare a stronger workforce in New Mexico," Martinez said. "He's the right person for this position and that's why I've chosen to reappoint him."

The other appointee brings a familiar name to UNM. Lee is a former Assistant United States Attorney and legislative assistant to Sen. Pete V. Domenici. UNM's Marron Hall, which now houses the Daily Lobo student newspaper, was named after her great-grandmother Frances Halloran Marron, a 1901 UNM graduate who served as one of the first female regents at the university from 1931 to 1933. Her grandmother, Frances Marron Lee, was also a regent in the 1940s. Lee's grandfather, father, aunt and husband are all graduates of UNM. She and her husband, Mike Nelson, are members of the Tom Popejoy Society. The Lee Family also owns a well-known ranch in Cibola County.

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«Both of these appointees have deep ties and long histories of support for this university,” said President Robert G. Frank. “We are indebted to Governor Martinez for making such thoughtful selections.»

“I am excited to appoint Marron as a regent at the University of New Mexico, where she will be able to continue her family’s legacy of effective service to the institution and our state,” Martinez said. “I know Marron well, and I believe she will bring a reform-minded approach to the university; she’s tough but fair, and will work tirelessly to ensure the education our students receive at UNM is exactly what they need to succeed in the workforce and in life.”

“Both of these appointees have deep ties and long histories of support for this university,” said President Robert G. Frank. “We are indebted to Governor Martinez for making such thoughtful selections. I am thrilled to have Regent Koch back in a time when we need his vast experience, and Marron Lee has a four generation history with UNM. What stellar qualifications she brings to the table!”

The governor said Koch has championed reforms designed to increase the number of graduates at the university and decrease the number of years it takes students to earn their degree. He previously served as a state legislator and was an original author of the New Mexico Inspection of Public Records Act. Koch is the former President of Daniels Insurance and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education from UNM.

Koch says he’s ready to get right down to business with the University’s budget summit set for Friday, April 10.

“This is probably the toughest budget I’ve seen in my days as a regent,” Koch said. “We have some difficult decisions to make in the next few weeks, and I am pleased to be able to return and utilize my experience on the University’s Finance and Facilities committee.”

Lee and her family have worked to establish scholarships at the university and are proud supporters of Lobo athletics. She worked in the U.S. Attorney’s office from 2001 to 2004 prosecuting cases related to violent crime, and abuse and neglect of children on tribal lands in New Mexico. Lee started her legal career in New Mexico as a prosecutor in the 3rd Judicial District Attorney’s Office in 1998. Lee also served on Senator Domenici’s Washington, D.C. staff

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from 1989 to 1995.

She has served on the New Mexico Museum of Natural History Foundation and the Albuquerque Museum Foundation Boards of Directors and as a parents' association vice-president at Manzano Day School. Lee also serves as chair of both the New Mexico Crime Victims Reparation Commission and the New Mexico Sentencing Commission.