

MEMO

To: NMPW members

From: Loretta Hall, Bylaws Committee Member

Re: Comments in support of changing the organization's name from New Mexico Press Women to New Mexico Media Professionals

- The proposed name better reflects today's diverse methods of disseminating information to the public. The word "press" brings to mind a nostalgic image of printing presses churning out newspapers. Newspapers are still an important element of the media, but so are others including radio, television, and Internet sites. The proposed name would make it clear that the organization seeks to support, inform, and encourage professional communicators in all types of media.
- The proposed name better reflects the current identity of our organization. We do have a few male members, two of whom currently serve on the NMPW Board of Directors. Men are eligible to hold elective office, and in fact, some have done so. On the other hand, some men resist the idea of joining a "women's organization." Women might feel similarly about deciding to join a (hypothetical) "New Mexico Men in the Media" organization, even if they were assured that they were welcome to do so. The proposed name emphasizes that our organization is, indeed, open to both men and women, and exists to help all professional communicators.
- New Mexico Press Women was formed in 1950. Then, and for a significant number of subsequent years, women faced limited opportunities in journalism careers. Thanks in large part to organizations like the National Federation of Press Women and its state affiliates, including New Mexico Press Women, many of those barriers to equitable pay, professional acceptance, and advancement opportunities have been largely overcome. However, they must still be protected, along with the equitable treatment of other groups that have faced discrimination on the basis of factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, or gender identity. The proposed name makes it clear that this organization supports the development and fair treatment of all media professionals and resists all forms of discrimination.
- Changing the name would not be a radical thing to do. We would be in good company among our peer organizations. Of the thirty state affiliates of the National Federation of Press Women, thirteen have adopted names that do not include the phrase "press women." Twelve of them have names that are gender neutral, and eight do not use the word "press."
- Even if the name is changed, this organization will continue to be the state affiliate of the National Federation of Press Women. That affiliation will continue to honor the history and legacy of New Mexico Press Women.