

Meet Our Founder

University students rarely have the chance to study with and learn from someone who has been a U.S. Senator, a presidential candidate, the author of more than twenty books, the national chairperson of one of our country's two major political parties, a member of one of the 20th century's foremost civil rights commissions, and a scholar who continues to advance our understanding of politics and political science.

But that's exactly what UNM students get to do as Fred Harris Interns.

U.S. Senator and UNM Professor Emeritus Fred Harris founded the Fred Harris U.S. Congressional Internship in 2006. Director of the internship program from its origins until his retirement in 2017, Senator Harris continues to teach in the program. Each semester, five students have the chance to explore political complexities and opportunities in conversation with him.

Click below to find out more about this dynamic scholar who is nationally respected for his commitment, intellectual passion, creative democratic vision, and fascinating personal story.



Fred Harris and the Kerner Commission



The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in session in Washington in 1967. Known as The Kerner Commission, after the chair, Otto Kerner, seated at the head of the table, the group was convened by President Lyndon Johnson in the wake of the 1967 race riots. Fred Harris is the second person to the right of Kerner. Underwood Archives/Getty Images
Source: NY Times

Former Oklahoma Senator and the Department of Political Science Internship founder, Fred Harris, was featured in The New York Times on February 28, 2018. In the article, Fred Harris recounts his time in the Kerner Commission, which was appointed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1967. Today, Harris is the lone survivor of the Commission.

“Headed by Governor Otto Kerner of Illinois, the 11-member commission was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in July 1967 to uncover the causes of urban riots and recommend solutions. The report, which declared that “our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal,” called for expanded aid to African American communities in order to prevent further racial violence and polarization.” (Source: <https://www.history.com/kerner-commission-report-released>) Read the full NYT article here: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/28/opinion/the-unmet-promise-of-equality.html>

Fred Harris: the Senator, the Educator



Fred Harris and Vice President Hubert Humphrey--Source: Albuquerque Journal

"His influence is felt through the army of students he has educated, but also through his political activism." – Donna Olmstead, Albuquerque Journal

Read how Fred Harris continues to advocate for issues closest to his heart:

<https://www.abqjournal.com/621915/activist.html>



The Department of Political Science was honored to have Fred Harris as the commencement speaker at the spring 2018 graduation convocation.

More articles, videos, and interviews with Fred Harris

NPR podcast interview -- 50 Years On, Sen. Fred Harris Remembers Great Hostility During 1967 Race Riots

Listen or read the transcript here: <https://www.npr.org/2017/07/20/538370689/50-years-on-sen-fred-harris-remembers-great-hostility-during-1967-race-riots>

New Mexico in Focus – Episode 1127 – Fred Harris Revisited

Watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45NIMxkJwhg>

Encyclopedia Britannica – Fred Harris: American Politician, Educator, and Writer

Read more about Harris' career: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Fred-Harris>