



2024

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

COLLEGE OF ACES

ANTONIA ROYBAL-MACK '03



“All the adults at NMSU cared about my success. Now, I love that every day I wake up to change someone’s life for the better.”

—Antonia Roybal-Mack '03

If you ask Antonia Roybal-Mack '03 how she chose NMSU, she will laugh and tell you that, in her family, it wasn't really a choice. She is the middle child of nine siblings, all of whom are Aggies.

A native of Mora, New Mexico, Antonia's success story began with a strong work ethic and community principles instilled at a young age. When she got to NMSU, "I surrounded myself with smart people who were positive influences and taught me that NMSU alumni can compete anywhere at the highest levels." She earned a B.S. in Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management (HRTM) in 2003.

Antonia credits many people as mentors, but her older brother instructed her that the one mission in college was to get straight As. "He taught me it's okay

to have dirty clothes in the hamper, but never okay not to do the work." While working for Jeff Witte at the Department of Agriculture, he and Frank DuBois encouraged her to apply for the NMSU Student Regent position, for which she was selected. In that role, Antonia credits Christina Chavez Kelley with teaching her the Ruth Bader Ginsburg principle that "women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

Six years after graduating from the University of New Mexico School of Law, Antonia founded Roybal-Mack & Cordova, P.C. She was the first female founder of a mass tort practice in the nation and the only one in the state, spurred by the 2022 wildfire disaster in which an out-of-control prescribed burn scorched almost 350,000 acres of her hometown. Antonia has represented thousands of claimants for more than a billion dollars in recovery damages, successfully lobbied for legislation benefiting wildfire victims, and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Center of Southwest Culture-Mora Fire Fund, which she founded and chairs.

Antonia also holds a Master of Laws from Texas A&M University. Her list of legal accolades is long and includes the 2024 Albuquerque Bar Association Attorney of the Year, the American Bar Association "On the Rise" award, the 2010 New Mexico Hispanic Bar Association Outstanding Young Lawyer award, and Albuquerque Business Weekly Women of Influence award.

Being a champion for the underdog is a key tenet of Antonia's career, and her law firm's motto is "Work Until You Win." She never met a cause she didn't like: "Ending suffering is important." She serves on the board of the Presbyterian Ear Institute and is equally passionate about kids' activities, supporting 4-H at the local county fairs, and "community-at-large work" such as assisting a special needs orphanage in Belize.

Antonia has stayed involved with NMSU. She established the HRTM Alumni Endowed Scholarship in 2016 and is a former board member for the College of ACES HRTM alumni board and the NMSU Foundation.

Her advice for students? "Intellect and emotions work inversely. If you are emotional about a problem, you are not solving it. Focus on solving the problem at hand, not how you feel about it. Then, cry all you want—just get it done." ▲