Whether you were one of the many who cared 50 years ago about starting a branch campus in Gallup, or you are one of the many who work, study and teach every day to keep our branch campus mission strong, it was hard not to feel the intense pride pulsing through the campus this week as we celebrated the UNM-Gallup 50th anniversary. Certainly, caring and passion – past and present - were apt themes for our celebration.

I was humbled to be surrounded by such strong community leaders who decided in the 1960’s that a local community college presence was needed. These great civic-minded individuals came together with an educational goal – and then made it happen.

Our 2,200 students and 200 employees are a strong testament to their persistence and I was honored to be in the presence of past and present Lobos yesterday as we gathered as one group to celebrate success. I thoroughly enjoyed swapping stories with UNM-Gallup founders Paul McCollum, Walter Wolf, Barbara Stanley, Bill Lewis and Earnest Becenti, Sr. who blazed a trail that our students are still benefiting from today.

I was also proud to be surrounded by our current campus community members who support and model excellence and achievement at every step. When the campus and community all came together for the 50th commemorative photograph and then gathered in the Commons for cake and esprit de corps, I was honored to be surrounded by so many who believe in the power of education to transform lives.

GO LOBOS – 50 years ago, today and for many years to come!
Thanks to our drone pilot Rachel Kaub who provided great aerial coverage. The scatter video and aerial flyover were great fun for everyone.

Gallup Lion Bill Lewis and Paul McCollum

UNM-Gallup celebrates 50 great years!
Earnest Becenti, Sr., age 92, was on the Gallup McKinley County School board when they voted to approve a bond to support higher education in 1967.
Everyone’s a Lobo – woof, woof, woof! A human 50!

The drone takes off for the aerial shot of UNM-G’s human 50!
Cake anyone?

Student Affairs Director Jayme McMahon helped serve cake to hundreds of attendees.
VIP's mix and mingle.

Staff members show off the decorations created by TRIO students.
Thanks for getting us where we are today! L to R: Earnest Becenti, Jr., Earnest Becenti, Sr., UNM-G advisory board member Priscilla Smith, Barbara Stanley, UNM-G advisory board members Gerald O’Hara and Teri Lynn Garcia, Bill Lewis, CEO Dr. James Malm, and advisory board chair Ralph Richards.

Photos courtesy of John Van’t Land.