



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Diné College Honors the Legendary Sen. John Pinto at Appreciation Event

SHIPROCK, N.M. — Diné College senior Felisha Adams became overjoyed as she thanked Sen. John Pinto “for being someone who has made this part of New Mexico great.”

Adams, an Iyanbito native and business administration major at Diné College, made the comments March 30 at an appreciation and information meeting at Diné College’s Shiprock campus.

The library at the campus is named after Sen. Pinto — the longest serving member of the New Mexico Senate. Pinto, 93, is from Tohatchi and began serving the state legislature in 1977.

“It was really a honor to have talked to Sen. Pinto, even tough it was for a very short time,” Adams, a former state legislative senate candidate three years ago in a separate district, said. “I think everyone who was in attendance was very thankful and appreciative.”

Diné College — the first tribally-controlled institution of higher learning in the U.S. — is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. There are various things planned to recognize the feat, such as a graduation tribute, golf tournament and an alumni gala.

The \$5M Bond Award

The College recently was awarded \$5 million in general obligation bonds for the construction of a new math and science building at the Shiprock campus. Gov. Susana Martinez signed off on the matter about a month ago and during final budget appropriations.

Director of Projects Operations at Diné College Delbert Paquin spoke at the appreciative meeting on Friday and informed Pinto of some details regarding the new building and other facility happenings, too.

“It’s like I’ve said before, this new building will be a tremendous addition to our campus,” Paquin stated.

Besides Adams and Paquin, Shiprock Campus Librarian Samantha Hewakapuge spoke about collections and services to students and the community. Hewakapuge said that during the past two years there have been outreach events at the Sen. John Pinto Library where students and their families came together.

Diné College Board of Regents President Greg Bigman introduced Sen. Pinto. Bigman represents the Northern Agency on the Board of Regents.

Pinto, D-Tohatchi, thanked those in attendance and wished the College well throughout 2018. Pinto is a graduate of the University of New Mexico and a former Navajo Code Talker and U.S. Marine.

Adams presented Pinto with a graduation invitation. “Thank you, thank you very much,” Pinto said to the 40-plus attendees at the appreciation event.