



WILLIAM H. PAYNE

UNM BOARD OF REGENTS REPRESENTATIVE

Bill Payne was raised in Albuquerque, and following completion of undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of New Mexico, entered the Navy in 1975. During his first 11 years of active duty, he served in Underwater Demolition Team ELEVEN, SEAL Team ONE, the U.S. Naval Academy, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Naval Special Warfare Unit ONE. Additionally, the Navy sent Bill to Georgetown University where he earned an MA in Government and a certificate in National Security Studies, eventually earning a Navy designation as a Middle East/Africa/South Asia Politico/Military sub-specialist.

Returning to Albuquerque from active duty in 1986, Bill completed his JD degree at the University of New Mexico School of Law where he was Associate Editor of the Natural Resources Journal. He is currently licensed to practice law in New Mexico and the District of Columbia.

Bill was made an Honorary UNM Letterman in 2012, and was recognized by the UNM Alumni Association with the Higher Education Distinguished Legislator Award in 2013.

Bill eventually became the first career reserve Navy SEAL to be promoted to Rear Admiral. He served in the Navy for nearly 35 years of active and reserve service including multiple recalls to active duty before retiring in October of 2009. Among his senior level positions, he served as Deputy Director for Strategy, Plans and Policy at United States Central Command, Director of Operations at United States Special Operations Command, and Deputy Commander, United States Navy Special Warfare Command.

First elected to the New Mexico Senate in 1996, Bill was the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, a member of the Energy Council, a Commissioner of the Uniform Law Commission, and the recognized leader for utility, veteran/military affairs, and natural resource issues in the Senate. He served as Minority Whip for 12 years.

Bill is married to Deborah Payne, a retired Commander U.S. Navy, and a retired manager at Sandia National Laboratories.