

REFERENCE TITLE: **Teofilo Archuleta Tachias; death resolution**

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-sixth Legislature
First Regular Session
2023

SCR 1043

Introduced by
Senators Miranda: Bennett, Bravo, Diaz, Gabaldón, Hatathlie, Hernandez;
Representatives Crews, Hernandez L, Quiñonez, Terech

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

ON THE DEATH OF TEOFILO ARCHULETA TACHIAS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Teofilo "Tio" Archuleta Tachias, community leader, elected official
2 and consultant, passed away on July 6, 2023 at the age of 87.

3 Tio, the youngest of 13 children, was born in Cabezon, New Mexico on
4 November 4, 1935. At six years of age, he and his family moved to
5 Flagstaff, Arizona. Tio attended South Beaver Elementary School,
6 Flagstaff High School and Arizona's Teacher College, now Northern Arizona
7 University. As a young man, he worked at one of the town's sawmills and
8 in masonry to afford college while providing for his family. Later in
9 life, he served as the business manager and treasurer at the local Ford
10 dealership and as the assistant director of public relations and
11 development at the Museum of Northern Arizona.

12 While Tio's career included various business endeavors, he
13 especially enjoyed the world of politics, an interest that started at a
14 young age. When he was 12, Tio witnessed President and presidential
15 candidate Harry S. Truman deliver a rousing campaign speech at the train
16 depot in Flagstaff. Toward the end, Truman pointed to Tio and said to
17 him, "with your help, I will be elected President of the United States."
18 For the next few weeks, Tio campaigned for Truman, knocking on doors,
19 shaking hands and distributing flyers and campaign signs. Truman won the
20 presidency in November 1948, and Tio beamed with pride for his role in the
21 victory. This experience ignited Tio's passion for politics and community
22 activism. A lifelong Democrat, Tio became the first Latino in Flagstaff
23 to win a major election, beating the incumbent to serve as a member of the
24 Coconino County Board of Supervisors, a position he held for 24 years. In
25 the early 1980s, Tio was appointed to the Arizona Board of Regents,
26 becoming the board president in 1984.

27 The impact of Tio's political career and community service reached
28 beyond Flagstaff and northern Arizona. Over the years, he won numerous
29 awards and recognitions, including the César Chávez Diversity Award in
30 2018 for his "outstanding community leadership and diversity." He also
31 served on the national board of directors for the Public Broadcasting
32 Service, was a founding member of the Coordinating Council on Mexican
33 American Affairs and secured a seat on the Governor's Advisory Board on
34 Economic Planning and Development. A strong advocate for tribal
35 sovereignty and self-determination, Tio also worked closely with several
36 Native Nations in Arizona. In 2016, the Arizona State Legislature honored
37 him by reading into the record a tribute to Tio, which stated in part:
38 "[Mr. Tachias] developed personal and political relationships with Arizona
39 Governors Castro, Babbitt, Mofford and Napolitano and is widely regarded
40 as the best person to identify, register and turnout new voters on the
41 Navajo Nation. His work contributed to countless victories and helped
42 thousands of new voters exercise their right to vote."

43 More important to him than his political pursuits, Tio loved
44 visiting with family and friends, watching sports, playing the guitar,
45 cooking award-winning fajitas and singing traditional Mexican folk songs.

1 He also enjoyed telling stories of his past, including shining shoes and
2 selling newspapers as a young boy to soldiers on the Santa Fe train,
3 meeting Elvis Presley and Andy Griffith during his time at Ford, sharing a
4 cocktail with former United States Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy,
5 hosting dinner at his home for Mexican American civil rights activist
6 César Chávez and greeting renowned singer Vicente Fernández in Mexico. An
7 avid reader and student of history, Tio also traveled extensively with his
8 wife, Micha, to Europe, South America, Mexico and Canada and throughout
9 the United States. Eager to share his adventures, Tio was a remarkable
10 storyteller, and his ability to recall specific details and captivate his
11 listeners remained with him throughout his life.

12 A true gentleman, Tio's calm and welcoming demeanor put people at
13 ease, while his selfless, graceful and humble attitude won him the
14 admiration of many. A loving and kind son, brother, husband, father,
15 grandfather, uncle, cousin, nephew and friend, Tio is survived by his wife
16 of 31 years, Micha, children, Christine (Willard) Gilbert, Sally (Tom)
17 McMillian, Tommy (Laura) Tachias and Karen (Pat) Marez, stepchildren,
18 Adriana (Ricardo), Alejandro and Leonardo Montiel-Cordova, brother,
19 Ernesto Tachias, 13 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren and two
20 great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents,
21 Alfredo and Aniceta Tachias, his first wife, Elisa "Liz" Fajardo, six
22 siblings, daughter, Gloria (Jerry) Dusek, and stepson Rafael
23 Montiel-Cordova.

24 Therefore

25 Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Arizona, the House of
26 Representatives concurring:

27 That the Members of the Legislature express their regret at the
28 passing of Teofilo "Tio" Archuleta Tachias and extend their deepest
29 condolences to his surviving family members.