



## Administrative Office of the Courts

### MEDIA ADVISORY

April 3, 2026

#### **Bayard's first Magistrate Judge Y.B. Morales has died**


The New Mexico Judiciary mourns the loss of The Honorable Ygnacio "YB" Barreras Morales, Bayard's first magistrate judge, who died March 28, 2026. He was 97.

"Judge Morales served the Bayard and Grant County community for 44 years as a justice of the peace and magistrate judge. He was a judge of integrity who cared deeply about his community and truly listened to those who appeared before him" said Sixth Judicial District Chief Judge Jerod Hofacket. "Those who knew him will remember not only his stories and presence, but the simple principle that guided his work: if it was not fair, it was not justice. His legacy is the example he set for all of us."

Judge Morales' judicial career started in 1963 when he served as justice of the peace in Bayard. In 1968, the state magistrate court system was created with part-time magistrates, and a court was established in Bayard. Judge Morales was elected in 1968 and worked half-time as a magistrate judge for many years and eventually three-quarter time – all while continuing to work full time at local copper mines. Judge Morales became a full-time magistrate judge in 1984, retiring from his mining job the same year. Judge Morales retired from the bench on Dec. 31, 2006.

Last year, the main courtroom in the Grant County Magistrate Court in Bayard was dedicated to Judge Morales. "I am grateful for all the experiences and people that taught me to serve with fairness, justice and dignity for everyone," said Judge Morales at the time.



Dedicated to  
**THE HONORABLE  
Y.B. MORALES**  
  
For His Service to the People  
of the State of New Mexico and For  
His Enduring Contribution to  
Justice  
Grant County  
Justice of the Peace 1963-1968  
Magistrate Judge Division II 1969-2006

**The Honorable Y.B. Morales at his courtroom dedication ceremony in March, 2025.**