

MORMON PIONEER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA (MPNHA)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 9, 2016



Sen. Robert Bennett 1933-2016—a true friend of pioneer heritage



The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area has lost a hero in the passing of former Sen. Robert Bennett who sponsored the National Mormon Pioneer Heritage Act, which brought the MPNHA into being.

Bennett, 82, died May 4 of complications related to a recent stroke. He also had pancreatic cancer.

Bennett had a long and distinguished political career, serving three terms as a U.S. senator.

He introduced his bill to create the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area during the 107th Congress (January 2001-2003). In his introduction, the senator spoke passionately about the need to preserve the rich pioneer heritage of the MPNHA.

“The story of the Mormon pioneers is one of the most compelling and captivating in our nation’s history... The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area will serve as special recognition to the people and places that have contributed greatly to our nation’s development,” he said.

The senator fought tirelessly to ensure passage of the bill. After it passed the Senate, it received the support of the House of Representatives on July 24, 2006. The act was signed into law by President George W. Bush on Oct. 12, 2006.

Bennett’s love for the area grew out of the many trips he took through the state campaigning for his father, U.S. Sen. Wallace Foster Bennett.

In a Discovery Road episode “Discovery Road – ANHA Tour” he spoke of those experiences:

<http://www.mormonpioneerheritage.org/discovery-road-videos/>

“With the development of the Interstate...it had the effect of leaving [Highway] 89 behind,” he said. “It meant it left a lot of history behind...It’s important that history not be lost.”

“The MPNHA and its people owe so much to the vision of Sen. Bennett and his commitment to preserving the rich history of the area,” said MPNHA Director Monte Bona. “We mourn the loss of a true friend and offer our condolences to Sen. Bennett’s family and loved ones.”

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The Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area includes 400 miles of glorious scenic byways, a vast array of wildlife, the best of western living, cattle and sheep ranches, and colorful mountain vistas, all within a trip on Utah Heritage Highway 89.