

**PROFESSIONAL VITA**  
Paul Louis Tapia  
1710 Alamo Av  
Alamogordo, New Mexico 88310

**PERSONAL DATA**

Date of Birth: June 21, 1931  
Marital Status: Married Lois Woodward in 1958  
Children: None

**ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE**

**New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped**  
Alamogordo, New Mexico  
Graduated in 1952

**University of New Mexico**  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
Received B.A Degree in 1957  
Major: Physical Education and Recreation  
Minor: Biology and Science

**University of Northern Colorado**  
Greely, Colorado  
Received M.A. Degree in 1973  
Major: Special Education (Vision)

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

1951 to 1953  
Boy Scouts of America Philmont Scout Ranch  
Member of scouting staff

1955 to 1957  
State of New Mexico, Division of Services for the blind  
Vending Machines and Management

1957 to 1987  
New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped  
Wrestling Coach and Member of the Teaching Staff  
During the thirty years at NMSVH the opportunity to teach children from kindergarden through twelfth grade in many subjects also held the positions of Orientation and Mobility Instructor and Dean of Students which required the supervision of the residential dorms.

**OTHER EXPERIENCES**

Summer months of 1964

Little Rock arkansas Enterprises of the Blind  
Taught Orientation and Mobility

Summer months of 1966 and 1967

New Mexico Services for the blind  
Taught Orientation and Mobility to blind adults

Served as Scout Master for 25 years.

**HONORS AND/OR AWARDS RECEIVED**

- 1993 Inducted into "The New Mexico School for the Handicapped Athletic Hall of Fame"
- 1987 Received NMSVH Alumni Association "Teacher of the Year"
- 198? Inducted into the " Amateur Athletic Union Hall of Fame"
- 1976 "Handicapped Person of the Year" for the State of New Mexico from the Governor's committee on Employment of the Handicapped in New Mexico
- 1953 Received the Silver Award Rank in the Boy Scouts of America
- 1951 Received the Eagle Scout Rank in the Boy Scouts of America

## Paul Tapia

The following events in the Life of Paul Tapia were events that influence his life, in character, physically and emotionally.

Paul Tapia was born in central New Mexico in Tapia, New Mexico. As Paul Tapia rode horse back and caring for the families cattle, he ventured unknowingly into an area in central New Mexico, which at that time was being employed by the army to test infantry weapons. As he approached a hollowed out area near a grove of scrub cedars a curiously shaped aluminum colored object attracted his attention. Paul walked over to examine it and discovered that as he shook it, a metallic object within the object he had picked up, slipped in and out and an explosion took place.

When he gained consciousness which must have been a few minutes after the explosion, he felt a burning hot particles shielding to the ground as he stood up he stood up tearing the rest of his clothes off and started to run but discovered the he could scarcely distinguish the scrub directly in front of him. The explosion had impacted his vision. There was something within him in the time of dire emergency which enabled him to respond appropriately.

He knew nothing at the age of 12 about sound utility for mobility and orientation, yet he heard the sound of an electric generator nearby and proceeded in that direction, after traveling through a maze of bar bed-wire fence he reached a service station. The attendant was speechless after seeing his naked chained body, but Paul calmly asked him to take him to his home.

After taking Paul to Santa Fe he went to a series of operations, for skin grafts over his left arm. The burns left deep scars on his chest and legs but miraculously no scars on his face. His left eye was with little vision and his right eye burned with complete vision loss.

After this my parents enrolled him at New Mexico school for the Blind. After school he immediately became very active in athletics both in track and wrestling. In Paul's freshman year he wrestled the 103 pound weight class, from his sophomore to senior year he was undefeated won 65 matches. While at UNM his freshman year he found they had no wrestling team, he continued to train with limited competition for practice he went on and took third at Sky line conference, at this time UNM awarded him a wrestling letter, and now he was captain of the wrestling team, he would challenge any wrestler to step on the mat with him, he went on to be undefeated his sophomore to senior year.

In his final days at the university, Paul stayed in all and was an assistant wrestling coach at AHS, after his internship Paul was offered a job by Dr Neil Quirby superintendent of New Mexico schools, Paul was offered a physical education and wrestling coach.

During the next 10 years the wrestling team went 7 years undefeated. Paul believed as his mentor Dr. Quinby that wrestling started at a young age. Paul would coach from first grade to twelfth grade, his belief that this one sport that the blind could compete with a sighted person.

In 1961 Paul was doing routine drills in preparation for a tournament when he was accidentally hit in his good eye, within two years he was completely blind.

In the next 3 years he continued to coach making them three of his strongest years.

Tragedy struck Paul when the new superintendent and the new school board believed a blind coach could not be a head coach. Paul's first reaction was to quit completely, but he decided to take a few years off, during this time his wrestlers started to transfer to public schools. Paul saw the impact and returned to coach the youth, he would travel with the students and if it was an open tournament he would compete.

# Tapia heads outstanding NMSVH wrestling program

By JANETTE BALDWIN  
Paul Tapia, teacher and coach at New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped, recently finished work for his master's degree at the University of Northern Colorado, at Greeley. He already held a BS in physical education from the University of New Mexico.

Tapia, originally from Stanley, is a 1952 graduate of NMSVH. His wife Lois teaches Braille in the elementary grades at NMSVH.

In 1943, Tapia, at the age of seven, picked up a cylindrical object and pulled a pin at the end. The resulting blast knocked him unconscious and burned off his clothes. When he regained consciousness, he realized he could see only the sunlight. He was placed in a hospital in Santa Fe, and there began a fight for his life.

For more than 20 days, Tapia was unable to understand anything that went on around him, nor could he recognize anyone. As he got a little better, a series of operations was performed in which skin was grafted to insure complete movement of his left arm. Later, several eye operations were performed. The loss of one eye resulted from the accident and vision in the other eye was below one-tenth that of a normal eye.

Tapia entered NMSVH after much persuasion from his mother, and soon adjusted to life there. He became interested in the Scouting program and moved up rapidly in that organization. He was chosen to represent a troop at the International Scout Jamboree in 1960, held in Valley Forge, Pa. A year later, he qualified as an Eagle Scout and later, while participating in the Explorer program, he earned his Silver Award.

He served as a staff member of the Piedmont Scout Ranch during the summers of 1961 to 1963. He reported that the Scouting program improved his attitudes toward all school activities.

Besides his scouting, Tapia loved music, and soon obtained a place in the school

orchestra. He also appeared as a saxophone soloist and a member of an extracurricular boys' glee club while at school.

An average student, he compiled a creditable academic record.

Wanting some sort of sports in his life, Tapia took up wrestling in the 103-pound class. Eight years later he graduated, having won 65

matches with no losses. Then in 1949, he won the basketball throw in a national meet and in 1952 he placed first in the rope climb and shot put.

While attending the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque, Tapia was not eligible for athletic competition in his freshman year but he was active in musical activities. During his sophomore year, Tapia became anxious to get into sports, specifically wrestling, but found there was no wrestling team at the university. Again, persistence prevailed. With no coaching and very little competition in practice matches, Tapia took third place in the Skyline Conference in 1951. By the next year, a team had been formed and Paul won four matches by falls, and again, lost none. He finally received an athletic scholarship, was elected captain of the wrestling team and won seven out of eight matches.

Tapia stated that he is grateful to the late Dr. Neil Quimby, who introduced him

to wrestling at NMSVH, since it has played an important role in his life.

Dr. Quimby had so much confidence in his wrestler that he relinquished his coaching duties to Tapia, who since 1957 has been a successful teacher and coach at the school.

Since Tapia took over the coaching reins at NMSVH, the school has lost only four meets

and has established a winning streak of 46 victories in a 20 year period. In 20 years of wrestling events, the school has only six dual meets. Under Dr. Quimby the team had 56 consecutive meets and an overall record of 69 and two losses.

Charles E. Buell, author of "Physical Education for the Blind," states that he vigorously opposes the practice followed by some public schools which excuse thousands of blind children from participating in physical education. He feels that well-rounded physical education for blind children is essential to their wellbeing.

Buell, who is athletic director at the California School for the Blind in Berkeley, has a chapter book dealing with Tapia's history as a student teacher and coach.



PAUL TAPIA

## Public Record

Judge Robert Bradley found Samuel J. Aubel, 40, of 708 Delaware Ave., guilty of DWI and fined him \$200. Aubel said he presented no defense in the case because he planned to appeal the ruling to district court.

Francisco Duran, 22, of 1306 Michigan Ave., was found guilty of failure to give immediate notice of an accident and Bradley deferred sentencing for 30 days. The Monday evening trial stemmed from an early morning accident Jan. 3 in which reports indicate two cars and some shrubbery at 306 New York Ave. were damaged.

Changing an earlier not guilty plea to one of guilty of a charge of disorderly conduct Harvey C. Talley, 30, of La Luz, received a \$25 fine.

Marriage License Applications  
Randolph Curtis Munn and Patricia Ann Christopher, both of Alamogordo, Jan. 31.

## Sheri Steele on NMSU honor roll

Sheri Smith Steele, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Smith of Alamogordo, recently was named to dean's honor roll for the semester at New Mexico State University.

Mrs. Steele maintains a 4.0 average. She is the bride of Patrick Steele.

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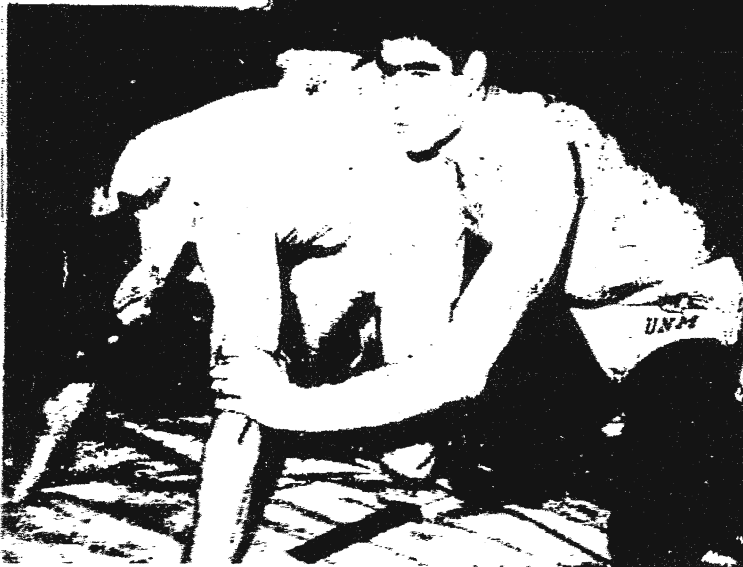
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UNM's PAUL TAPIA demonstrates one of his wrestling holds on Bob Lehman.



An Exploding Hand Grenade and a New Career . . .

# U. Wrestler Paul Tapia Is Tops Despite the Fact That He's Blind

BY JULIUS GOLDEN  
Associated Press Sports Writer

When college wrestler Paul Tapia was 8, he and his buddies would look for discarded machine gun shells on a military target area near his home at Elmore.

One day in 1935, the boys were searching the area. Paul spotted something on the ground, squatted and picked up a hand grenade.

"I guess I pulled the pin," he said.

The grenade exploded in his hand leaving his body scarred and putting out of range of his ballroom class everything but make out.

That was the start of Paul's wrestling career.

Paul, 25, a 147-pound middleweight student at the University of New Mexico, today is the university's top wrestler. Before the accident he had a night vision of the Alameda school for the Visually Handicapped. It was there he learned to wrestle.

"I picked it up first thing," he said. "I don't have any trouble as far as my eyes are concerned, when I am blind. Some of the boys at the school at Alameda can't see at all and they're good wrestlers."

But his near blindness does not stop him from studying a 200-page book. When he reads, the book is so close it touches his nose most of the time. Despite this, he maintains the standard "C" average required by the university.

Wrestling is a different matter. With a persistence born

of love, Paul labors to master and perfect every technique of the difficult sport.

Early in March he suffered his first college defeat in the Skyline Conference wrestling meet at Colorado State. It came at the hands of Don Lockwood, of the host school, who won the championship. Paul was third.

"I want to tip-top condition," Paul said.

There's a tremendous amount of steaming and hard work behind Paul's pain for "tip-top condition." New Mexico wrestling coach Leo Cullen said:

"Paul sometimes spent six hours a day on his own training for the Skyline meet. He sweated more than he ate and spent so much working on technique that he was looking up eyes. The kid is a human dynamo."

Dr. Neal Gandy, superintendent of the Alameda school, also attests to Paul's stamina. Quoting a former college wrestler himself, first introduced as a wrestling to school for the blind at Alameda in 1934.

"Paul was just a scrappy kid when he first came to Alameda," Gandy said. "He still has that same scrappy spirit. But I can't soon describe him. He is the hardest wrestling meat I ever have seen in my line."

And I'm not making any excuses."

Gandy said Paul is del-

and by the boys at the Alameda school. Thirty of the 54 boys are on the wrestling team which won the last two western wrestling championships for schools for the blind.

Paul is one of the reasons we've got the team we have now," Gandy said. "He used to go to at six in the morning to work out. He gave those boys a spirit."

Paul is on a state scholarship at the university. He is majoring in physical education in line with his highest dream.

"I'm going back to Alameda when I get out of college and coach track and maybe both with wrestling," he said. "That's what I want to do more than anything else."

Gandy said Paul has no worries.

"There will always be a job here for Paul," he said. "But some other school is liable to grab him off."

Meanwhile, Cullen looks forward to seeing sophomore Paul with him for the next two years as his top wrestler. Calling him a coach's dream, Cullen said:

"If we had nine guys like Paul, all we'd have to do is clear up."