

## VIGIL, XAVIER I.

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**From:** City of Santa Fe <noreply@santafenm-gov.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:48 PM  
**To:** Governing Body Public Comment  
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Submitted on: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 2:48pm

- First Name: Melissa
- Last Name: Vigil
- Your Email Address: [REDACTED]
- Your District: District 1
- Meeting Date: 1/28/26
- Section of Agenda you would like to comment on: Public Comment
- Your Comment: The Soldier's Monument stood on the plaza for more than 150 years – a monument to those who defended New Mexico and the Union against the scourge of slavery and ideals of the Confederacy. My third great grandfather fought in the Civil War at a time when New Mexico was a new U.S. territory – at a time when local Hispanos were viewed with suspicion by their new government but were nonetheless eager to show their commitment to their new country with their service.

The final plaque that was added referencing unfortunate characterizations of Native Americans has been problematic for decades but was chiseled out in the early 1970s – a hundred years after it was publicly displayed. Nobody complained at the defacement, and it stood in that condition for 50 years. Leaving it in that state was as if we all agreed that the country had moved on and the language and characterization displayed on that plaque had been unwelcome. The defacement was itself a monument to our evolution as a people.

The toppling of the obelisk in 2020, however, was also deeply offensive as was the lack of prosecution that followed. Due process was not followed. Prior to its destruction, there had been no discussion among the governing body, or the citizens. There were no public hearings, just a mob who forcefully tore it down, and brutalized police at the same time. The lack of prosecution following the toppling was as if the lawless behavior of a few were rewarded. Their actions exposed deep rifts within the community and continue to pit one against another.

The downtown area displays an array of historically significant monuments, appropriate for the oldest and deeply significant U.S. capital city. The Cross of the Martyrs commemorates those who died during the Pueblo Revolt. The Palace of the Governor's, the San Miguel Chapel, the Cathedral, and Loretto Chapel harken to the importance of governance and faith in our community. The new History museum and the Art museum show our values for those ideals. The Bataan Memorial Honors New Mexicans who fought and suffered greatly during the second World War, while the Soldier's monument commemorates the early years of New Mexico in the United

States and its immeasurable contribution in ending the Confederacy's expansion westward. What a different place the country would be if the Confederacy hadn't been stopped at Glorieta Pass.

It is a monument that I imagine my third great grandfather visited often with pride, recalling his experiences. It certainly was a monument that I visited often when I was a child and still do today. Recent generations have forgotten its significance, but its destruction has renewed interest in the monument and the state's role in the Civil War era. Those of us with ancestors who served their new country in the late 1800s, are proud of their contributions.

It would be a travesty to remove the monument. Santa Fe and New Mexico history should be present on the plaza. I support rebuilding it on the plaza, but acknowledging every historical aspect/era: inception, defacement, current day, but rebuild it with the utmost sensitivity to all. Doing so has the potential to heal and reunite the community. I believe this was the same conclusion that the CHART process proposed.