

An hour-long film tracks Domenici's beginnings on the Albuquerque City Council to the Senate. | AP Photo Close

## Domenici makes big-screen debut

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Pete Domenici has been out of the U.S. Senate since 2009, but it's just now that he's getting his big-screen moment.

A glowing new documentary about his career — titled, simply, “Domenici” — makes its Washington premiere Thursday night at the Motion Picture Association of America. The event is sponsored by the Bipartisan Policy Center, where Domenici is currently a senior fellow.

“This is about a baseball player, a teacher and a lawyer,” narrator Sam Donaldson says, beginning the film. “About a father and a patriot. This is about leadership.”

Besides the narration by the former ABC news anchor, the film features cameos from Domenici's long roster of friendly politicians, earned during six terms in the U.S. Senate: Chris Dodd, Bob Dole, Bill Clinton, Lamar Alexander, Alice Rivlin and Howard Baker.

The hourlong film tracks Domenici's beginnings on the Albuquerque City Council to, just a short

six years later, his election to the U.S. Senate as the first Republican senator from New Mexico in 38 years.

Domenici, who has eight children, recalls struggling during those early years in Washington thanks, in part, to his large family.

“We were too poor to have this job because we didn’t have the money to come home,” said Domenici. “It cost more than one month’s pay for the round-trip tickets for 10 people, so we didn’t do that too much.”

From Domenici’s tenure on the Budget Committee to his leadership on such issues as the Human Genome Project to mental health and nuclear energy, the film paints a picture of Domenici as a man ahead of his time.

“The Budget Act was whatever Pete Domenici said the Budget Act was,” said Denise Greenlaw Ramonas, Domenici’s legislative director from 1986 to 1990.

Referring to Domenici’s efforts on the committee to balance the budget, Dole said, “If you look back now and see where we are today, had we followed some of Pete Domenici’s efforts way back in 1985, we might be out of this mess.”

“He and I both believed that crafting a workable budget is a key responsibility of the United States government, and his work in building consensus helped us to pass the balanced budget in 1997,” Clinton said.

But Domenici doesn’t simply let the others talk him up; he’s willing to pat himself a bit on the back as well in the film.

“I think I got things done for my state, my country and maybe the world,” Domenici said.

In addition to Domenici and his wife, Nancy, the screening is expected to draw such notables as Interior Secretary Ken Salazar; Sens. Tom Udall and Kay Bailey Hutchinson; Dodd; former Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman; former New Mexico Gov. Garrey Carruthers; and Bipartisan Policy Center President Jason Grumet.

“Domenici” will be available in late September for viewing online and will also be available for purchase. Please check with the **Domenici Institute** at New Mexico State University for additional information: <http://domenici.nmsu.edu/index.html>