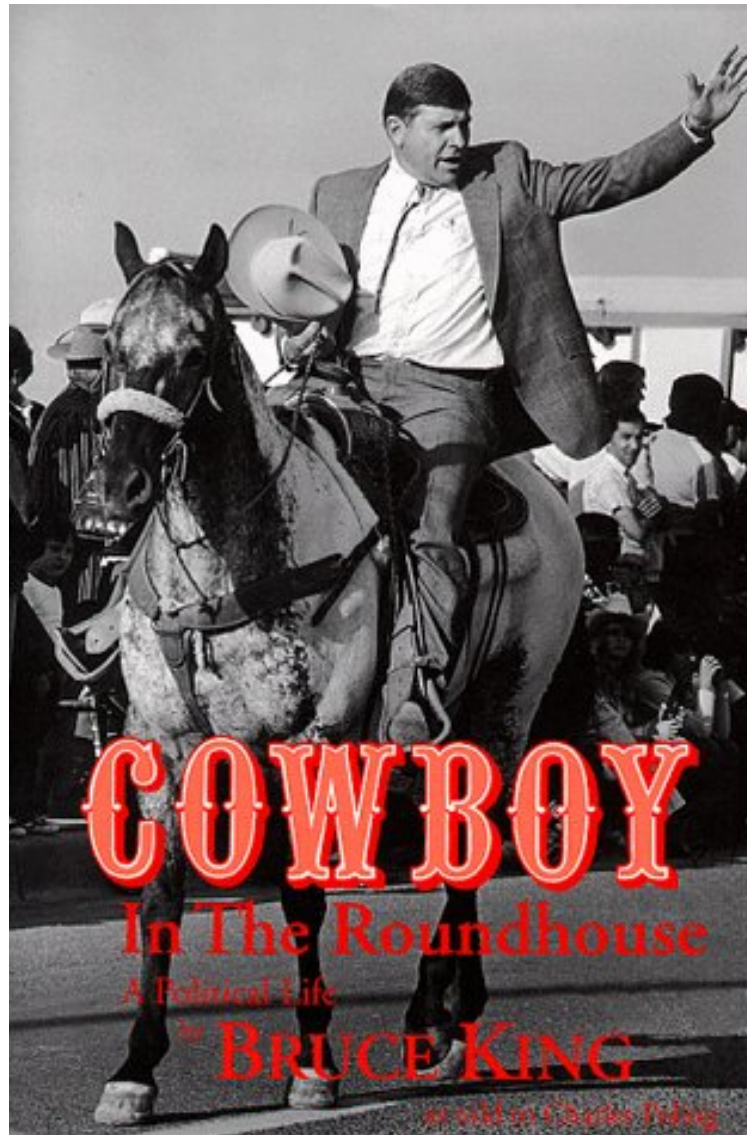


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## Cowboy in the Roundhouse: A Political Life

*Bruce King, Charles Poling*

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**Bruce King, Charles Poling : Cowboy in the Roundhouse: A Political Life** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Cowboy in the Roundhouse: A Political Life*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Intriguing political biography  
By Eric Hobart  
As other reviewers have said, Bruce King was a mainstay of New Mexico politics in the latter half of the 20th century. As has also been mentioned, the book is a rather politicized work, but this is to be expected from a politician. King has written his autobiography, which is a work that focuses on his political life moreso than any of his life outside of the political

arena. He explains, in great detail (and quite convincingly) that he was a conciliator during his political life, and that he was a moderate Democrat that was concerned more about the welfare of the state than many politicians who are more concerned about their own political livelihoods or their legacy. In this work, King enables us to see how New Mexico politics has evolved over the last half century, and what role he played in that arena during those years. It is a quick read, and enjoyable for anyone familiar with the state or intrigued by the American southwest. The only thing I found frustrating about the work was his constant "name dropping"; he often time would start a paragraph or a section of the book with a list of 10 or 15 names - people that he was affiliated with, or trying to influence for one reason or another. In summary, it was a good book, an enjoyable book, and worth reading. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A New Mexico Classic By Glen L. Loveland This book is a wonderful historical record of New Mexico politics in the 20th Century. Filled with insightful anecdotes and provoking commentary. Bruce King is a very important figure in N.M. It's scary to think that he almost didn't write this book. I highly recommend. 0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. a political whitewash By Robert Browning I was more than a little disappointed in this far less than candid political biography. One sided vaude and looking at the political world of New Mexico with very partisan Rose colored glasses is just the beginning of my complaints about this dull manuscript. King saves much of his venom for liberal Republican former Gov. David Cargo. He white washes his problems with corrupt Democrat Governors Jerry Apodaca and Toney Anaya. He has no recollection about the stolen election of 1978 when he and Bill Richardson ordered the cotter pins cut on voting machines in the North East heights of Albuquerque and the paper ballots detained at the state fair grounds. He does not pretend that Joe Skeen was his "friend". He does not mention the 1980 debacle of trying to get his less than competent nephew David King appointed to the seat of the late Harold Runnels in Congress. He was the biggest supporter of the patron system and claims he was against it. He was an obstacle to progress and quarrelled with the conservative coalition during his second term and a incompetent joke during his 3rd and last term. A bad bio from a miserable Governor only for his fellow partisan Democrats.

Bruce King towers over the political landscape of New Mexico in the last half of the twentieth century. Born the son of a homesteader in the tiny Santa Fe County farm-and-ranch community of Stanley, King decided in seventh grade to be governor of New Mexico. The story of how he accomplished that goal-three times!-plays out against the tremendous transformations occurring in the society, culture, politics, and business of New Mexico since World War II. When King won his first Santa Fe County Commission seat in 1954 at age 29, running for office was a down-home affair. Politics was personal. But as he served in office and climbed the political ladder toward his lifelong ambition, New Mexico changed. The state's population shifted away from the rural communities to the rapidly expanding cities, while the once-dominant agricultural interests in the legislature yielded to the emerging urban voting blocs. Meanwhile, the challenges of governing grew ever more complex. King's well-recognized skills of mediation and conciliation helped him lead the state through a time of often-bewildering change. This book is rich with colorful stories as King recalls the major events of his career and conveys the human side of campaigning, governing, political deal-making, and sparring with the press. He also talks about his friendships and encounters with many of the leading national and state political figures of our time, including President Bill Clinton, President Ronald Reagan, President Jimmy Carter, Senator Pete Domenici, and Energy Secretary Bill Richardson. A classic tale of political intuitions spiced by New Mexico flavor as unique as Hatch green chile, Cowboy in the Roundhouse is lively reading. As famed mystery writer Tony Hillerman writes in his introduction to the book, 'While I count myself among the many who wanted Bruce King to write an autobiography, I doubt if any of us had much hope he'd get around to doing it. Now he has and it's even better than we'd expected.'

About the Author Charles Poling is a journalist and author who struggles to remember a time when Bruce King was not governor. Poling writes fiction and true stories about the history, business, politics and daily life of New Mexico. He currently makes his home in Placitas, where the past, present, and future blend together and resonate with the peculiar harmony and dissonance known as New Mexico.