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SAY AGAIN?:

Quick guide to pronouncing 'Smatresk,' last name of the new UNLV president

By **Emily Richmond** (contact)

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Please.

The name of the new UNLV president does not rhyme with "mattress."

That's the bottom-line advice from UNLV on how to correctly pronounce Neal Smatresk.

And then there are some television news anchors who are managing to squeeze three or four syllables out of Smatresk — which has but two, according to an e-mail issued by UNLV's chief spokesman, Dave Tonelli.

Here's his pronunciation guide:

- Sma rhymes with spa, as in "health spa."
- Tresk rhymes with desk, as in "I'm sitting at my desk."
- The emphasis is on the first syllable, SMAH-tresk.

At a special meeting to appoint Smatresk on Aug. 6, Regent Ron Knecht told the new president — who hails from Hawaii — that "If you promise to say Nevada — not Ne-vaaah-daah — we'll say, 'Smaaaah-tresk.'"

Tricky names among the Las Vegas Valley's educational leadership are nothing new. Clark County Schools Superintendent Walt Rulfes — whose surname is mispronounced on a regular basis — said he can empathize. He prefers RULF-fes. There's nothing that really rhymes with that, so Rulfes has learned to be content with ROLE-fes or even RAWL-fes.

Just please don't call him Rulfes.



Neal Smatresk

Audio Clip

UNLV President Neal Smatresk pronounces his name.

Sun Archives

- UNLV leader weighs options in selecting athletic director (8-18-2009)
- Smatresk appointed UNLV president with 2-year contract (8-6-2009)

Beyond the Sun

- UNLV Office of the President

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