Friendly Fallout 1953 delivers dramatic account of Nevada’s atomic history

Friendly Fallout 1953, by Emerita Foundation Professor of English Ann Ronald, is a hybrid work of literature that combines the actual history of atomic tests in the Nevada desert with fictional vignettes that explore the impact of the tests on the people who participated in them and on civilian “downwinders.” Ronald compellingly evokes the test explosions in all their terrifying magnificence and explores the diverse and sometimes conflicting emotions of a generation who saw atomic energy as its best protection against the horrors of another world war, even though it meant sacrificing innocent people, wildlife and livestock.

A. Constandina Titus, author of Bomb in the Backyard: Atomic Testing and American Politics, says: "Friendly Fallout expertly and eloquently recounts the drama of atomic weapons testing in Nevada through the voices of colorful characters (a secretary, a soldier, a physicist) who seemingly have little in common beyond their unfortunate location in time and space. As the chronicle unfolds, however, the author deftly weaves their stories into a patchwork quilt of doom that captures our imagination, pulls at our heartstrings, and not so subtly warns us of the damage that can be wrought by those charged with our protection."

The 248-page book was published by University of Nevada Press this year.