

Larry Spear, 2019 Wheeler Peak Lifetime Achievement Award



Larry Spear received a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and Archeology with a minor in Geography and a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of New Mexico (UNM). He started working as a graduate student research assistant at UNM's Division of Government Research (DGR) in 1979 and retired as a senior research scientist in 2012 after DGR was reorganized. During this employment he became a Geographic Information Systems Professional (GISP) and he also completed a minor in statistics at UNM. He has since completed several statistics and geography (GIS/GIT) classes as a non-degree graduate student at UNM. At DGR he collaborated with an interdisciplinary group of staff and students with strong statistical, computing, analytical, and GIS backgrounds providing data integration, data analysis, and GIS services to several New Mexico state agencies as part of UNM's public service mission. Among the most notable was work for the Secretary of State's Office realigning voting precinct boundaries that brought one of the first ESRI license to UNM during 1982. He also participated in the development and long-term maintenance of a transportation oriented statewide GIS for the New Mexico Traffic Safety Bureau used to identify problem locations. He later collaborated with senior statistical staff in the development of a healthcare gravity model for the New Mexico Health Policy Commission used to identify underserved areas. This gravity model and recent developments by other researchers has become a continuing research project with a focus on conducting a more in-depth statistical analysis of the various model results.