

The University of New Mexico

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September 25, 2006

**Honorary Degree  
Committee Office of the  
Secretary University of  
New Mexico**

**Dear Committee Members:**

**I would like to nominate Larry J. Gordon for an honorary degree. Mr. Gordon exemplifies the qualities for which this award is intended. For more than five decades, Larry Gordon has worked tirelessly to improve the lives of people in the Southwest through his dedication to public health and public service. While his work has profoundly affected food safety, air quality and public health in the Southwest, Gordon is certainly a national figure in public health.**

**He served as President of the 55,000 member American Public Health Association (1980-1981) and continues to speak to and advise numerous national public and private groups, such as Underwriters Laboratories. His national and state awards in environmental health and public health are simply too numerous to recount here (see <http://www.ncleha.org/larrygordon/bio.htm>). For example, in 1987, he received the Sedgwick Award for his public health contributions, the highest honor bestowed by the American Public Health Association. In 1988, he was given the New Mexico Governors' Distinguished Public Service Award. In 1981, he was named an Honorary Member of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health in the United Kingdom. The University of New Mexico Alumni Association bestowed the Zimmerman Award in 1993, and the University of Michigan School of Public Health Alumni Association honored him with the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1995.**

**Gordon has published over 240 articles and technical reports. Although he modestly claims to be only a practitioner, his work has profoundly affected the development of academic public health. He was a founder of the Council on Education for Public Health (the national accrediting agency for schools of public health), a founder of the American Intersociety Academy for the Certification of Sanitarians (now the American Academy of Sanitarians), as well as a long-time member of the National Environmental Health Science and Protection Accreditation Council (the national accrediting agency for environmental health and protection academic programs).**

**When I was a graduate student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health over three decades ago, I had never met Larry, but I certainly knew of him- Gordon articles in environmental health were required reading for all public health students.**

Like any true leader and real visionary, Gordon as often admonished the field and frequently led it in new directions. (See <http://www.ncleha.org/larrygordon/default.asp> and [http://www.ncleha.org/larrygordon/papers/NM\\_Magazine\\_pdf](http://www.ncleha.org/larrygordon/papers/NM_Magazine_pdf))

Trained first in biology (Master of Science, UNM 1950), Gordon began his career by teaching high school science. When an entry-level position in environmental health in Grant County, New Mexico became available, Larry applied and was hired in a field that he would eventually lead, not just in New Mexico, but nationally. Within a year, he was promoted to State Food Sanitarian for the New Mexico Department of Health.

Wanting to learn more about environmental health, Larry pursued a master's degree in public health at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health, where he specialized in Environmental Health (MPH 1954). He returned to his New Mexico in 1954, determined to apply his skills and knowledge.

Within a few years, he had cleaned up the restaurants in Albuquerque and was ready to tackle air quality in Bernalillo County. It wasn't always easy. While Gordon was serving as the founding director of the Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Environmental Health Department (1957-1968), one city official recommended that Larry be "tarred and feathered and ridden out of town on a rail," so that he wouldn't ruin the area's industrial opportunities.

Gordon persisted, succeeded, and moved on to the state level where he founded the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Agency as well as the New Mexico Scientific Laboratory System. He returned to Albuquerque in the 1980s to head the Albuquerque Environmental Health and Energy Department. Twice he served as Cabinet Secretary for Health, once for a Democratic governor and once for a Republican governor.

Gordon tried to retire in 1988, but once again, he was called to serve, this time for the University of New Mexico. He has served as a Visiting and Adjunct Professor in the School of Public Administration and the Department of Political Science. In both capacities, he continued to demonstrate his extraordinary work ethic and dedication to public service. He advised students, supervised internships, and wrote more articles and chapters than ever before. He retired from UNM in 2005. He continues to be in great demand throughout the country for lectures and program reviews.

Based on the criteria for the University of New Mexico's honorary degree, Larry J. Gordon merits this honor based both upon his academic contributions as well as his public achievements. He is an extraordinary individual whose remarkable career has contributed much to the material welfare of people of the Southwest as well as to the nation and beyond.

Thank you very much for considering this nomination.

Sincerely yours,

Deborah R. McFarlane, DrPH, MPA Professor

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**The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center**

**School of Medicine**

**Institute for Public Health**

**MSC04 4085**

**1 University of New Mexico**

**Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131-0001 (505) 272-3881  
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September 27, 2006

Honorary Degree Committee

Office of the

Secretary Scholes Hall, Room 103

University of New Mexico Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the University of New Mexico Institute for Public Health, we are writing to nominate Mr. Larry J. Gordon, MS, MPH, for an honorary degree. Mr. Gordon has made a life-long contribution to the State of New Mexico and to our country through his public health leadership and his demonstration of strong, ethical public service.

Larry Gordon is widely known throughout the country as one of the great leaders of environmental health. He grew up in rural New Mexico, where his mother taught in one-room schoolhouses and his father worked for the Forest Service. Education and service were priorities in his family. After receiving his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Biology from the University of New Mexico, he began work as a County and then a State Sanitarian, leaving briefly to pursue a Master of Public Health from the University of Michigan. As his own career in New Mexico advanced, he mentored and supported numerous other professionals over the years in their pursuit of graduate degrees and in involvement in state and national professional organizations, believing that professional education and volunteer service in public health were essential in addressing the challenging problems facing our citizens. He helped to create and served on the boards of the national accrediting bodies for graduate education in both public health and environmental health.

He took seriously the honor of public service, always seeing what services and structures were not there and working to create them. He founded the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Environmental Health Department, one of the first local environmental health departments in the United States, and wrote and gained passage of most of the local ordinances and regulations. He founded the NM Environmental Improvement Division, the forerunner to the current NM Department of Environment, writing the necessary environmental regulations for that agency's work, and founded the NM Scientific Laboratory, still located on the University

campus. It was Gordon's vision that this professional public laboratory should serve all of the state's public health laboratory needs, and it continues today to serve as a model for other states throughout the country. He established New Mexico's national reputation as a leader in public health.

Mr. Gordon served under several City of Albuquerque mayors and several New Mexico governors, most recently as Cabinet Secretary for Health, always demonstrating strong leadership and a stubborn, quiet advocacy for basic environmental health protections for all residents. He remained active for decades in the American Public Health Association, and was elected its President in 1981, traveling the country speaking on pressing public health issues. He received the highest honors from the American Public Health Association and the National Environmental Health Association, as well as the New Mexico Distinguished Public Service Award and the UNM Alumni Association Zimmerman Award.

He is a prolific writer and speaker; his papers are archived on a national web site. He continues to correspond with numerous students and former employees, who themselves have gone on to contribute in the field of public health. His work is legendary in creating the modern philosophy of environmental health and protection services. He and his wife, Nedra, have also made philanthropic contributions which underscore their belief in the value of education.

Mr. Gordon is an outstanding candidate for an honorary degree. He has brought distinction to his state, his university, and his country through his tireless work on behalf of the environment and public health.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination, and please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information.

Sincerely,

William Wiese, MD, MPH, Director

Sarah Kotchian, EdM, MPH, PhD, Associate Director

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October 4, 2006

Honorary Degree Committee  
Office of the Secretary  
Scholes Hall, Room 103  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131  
Dear Members of the Committee,

Please consider this my statement of support for the nomination of Larry Gordon to receive an Honorary Degree. As indicated in Mr. Gordon's curriculum vitae and in the letters of nomination from UNM Institute of Public Health Professor McFarlane, and Directors Weiss and Kotchian, Larry's accomplishments are extraordinary and have furthered the cause of environmental health science and management not only in New Mexico, but nationally as well.

I am but one of the many individuals inspired by Larry to pursue a career in the environmental health field and I'm most grateful for the opportunity to have developed under his leadership. Having spent over thirty years in the management and direction of environmental programs at the state and federal levels, any success I may have achieved in the delivery of service to the public has been largely due to my early learning experiences working for Larry Gordon. I believe the significance of his contributions not only to environmental health science but to the effective planning, organization and management of efforts to address public health based missions will continue to be realized for generations to come.

Larry was among the earliest of pioneers to organizationally address environmental health issues in the U.S. creating one of the very first local environmental health departments in the country. Throughout his career he has persistently championed responsible directions for leadership in the practice of public health administration. As evidenced by his extensive list of awards and professional affiliations Larry has achieved widespread respect and acclaim for his continuing environmental health advocacy and his effective leadership style. For several decades his straight forward, common sense approach to problem solving and public administration/management has continued to appeal to a very broad base of entities in the public health community including the nation's schools of public health, other health and public administration professionals, elected officials, the business community, public interest groups, employees and students to name a few.

Larry is that most unique kind of individual who has been such a visionary leader at the policy level and yet so practical in the execution of process. I believe this is one of the attributes which has permitted him to maintain credibility not only among professionals in the scientific/technical and managerial community but within the political process as well. To take disparate programs, located in various different public agencies and to consolidate them into one agency while creating new compliance and analytical initiatives to more comprehensively address a common mission (i.e. today's NM Environment Dept., and NM Scientific Laboratory System) required overcoming political barriers as well as bureaucratic inertia and resistance. Yet, Larry succeeded in accomplishing such restructuring and new direction convincing the various governors and legislative bodies, at the time, along with other interest groups of not only the improved economies of scale but the greater degree of service to be realized by the citizens of New Mexico. These initiatives set the stage for further advancements in the delivery of public health programs for New Mexicans and positioned the new agencies at the forefront of environmental health and laboratory management throughout the country. These agencies flourish today as a direct result of Larry Gordon's stewardship.

It has been my experience that rare is the individual who has been as scholarly in publishing and lecturing as extensively as Larry and at the same time has been the most effective of practitioners, even when it comes to controversial initiatives. Larry truly has "Walked the Talk".

For his extensive and meaningful contributions to the advancement of environmental health science and management and public administration in general, I can think of no one more deserving to receive an Honorary Degree, and particularly from the University of New Mexico, than Larry Gordon.

<sup>R</sup> Sincerely,



Russell Rhoades Former Director, NM Environmental Improvement Agency  
Former Chair, NM Water Quality Control Commission  
Former Director, US Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 Env Services Division  
Former Director, Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality

110/1/2006

**HOWARD**  
**UNIVERSITY**

College of Medicine  
Department of Community  
and Family Medicine

The Committee on Honorary Degrees  
The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

To Members of the Committee;

I write to recommend Larry Gordon for an honorary doctorate degree. I do so with enthusiasm.

I have known Mr. Gordon for decades as a peer in the field of environmental health. In earlier assignments as the ranking state health official, first of Michigan, and later, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I had ongoing interaction with Larry. I also interacted with him when I served as director of health standards for the United

States Occupational Safety and Health Administration and more recently as dean of the public health faculty at University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. I have served with Mr. Gordon on an inordinate number of national and international advisory commissions. I simply point out these associations with Larry to indicate my "qualifications" or standing to make this recommendation.

His resume will be well delineated by others in the University community and I shall not rehearse it here. Larry Gordon will live in the annals of public and environmental health as an inspirational preceptor, as a brilliant innovator in environmental risk assessment and risk management for the prevention and control of environmental disease and disability. He is a public servant who advances, without fear of controversy, upon the public health issue that confront communities.. In both state and local work in New Mexico, Larry's leadership in applying classic methods and developing new one culminated in public health programs and service that deserved commendations of the highest order. In this process Mr. Gordon has led in efforts to coordinate physical health services with environmental health services, where there is often a disconnect between the two areas. In this direction has recognized and taught the importance of understanding the environment in solving today health problems.

This concept was clearly articulated from his "pulpit" as a distinguished president of the American Public Health Association, and in a number of papers he has written and speeches he has made, since that time.

In service to the profession, Mr. Gordon was one of the architects of the standards for accreditation of schools of public health in the United States. He applied those same skills to the establishment of another accrediting body for academic environmental health programs outside schools of public health. In fact it is no exaggeration to assert that improvement in the quality of instruction, and in teaching and research resources for environmental health is due to Larry's national leadership.

Mr. Gordon has been aggressive in recruiting, training and inspiring young scientists for careers in environmental health, many of these individuals have gone on to careers of leadership in public health, academic environmental health and private practice.

With almost monotonous regularity, Larry reminds policymaker, researchers, academicians, and the general public that without a consideration of the environment, a complete epidemiology of disease cannot be achieved. His peers fondly refer to him as a "tireless fighter for environmental protection," a badge he wears with pride. Swift in emergency action for public health, gifted in long-range planning, he is a dynamic force in bringing public health/environmental health to its full potential.


Now at the peak of an extraordinary career, Mr. Gordon has amassed a wealth of experience in local, state and federal environmental health, professional education and environmental epidemiology and public health administration. He delights in controversy whether overcoming barriers to advancing the application of the environmental health sciences, or jousting with his peers on the efficacy of an environmental management approach.

This towering figure in public health embodies the scientist-administrator's dedication to truth, and the health specialist's concern for human suffering.

I could go on with more supportive information about Larry Gordon including our recent work as advisors to Underwriter Laboratory and other public and private sector organizations. But to keep this letter at reasonable length, I will simply conclude that the sum vector of the comments in the preceding paragraphs and other information in the archives of public health, is a clear indication that in my view the University of New Mexico would do a great service to the people of New Mexico, and honor itself, by honoring one of its most distinguished citizens, Larry Gordon.

Respectfully,



  
**Bailus Walker, Jr PhD MPH**  
**Professor of Environmental and Occupational Medicine**  
**Immediate Past Chairman, Committee on Toxicology**  
**National Academy of Sciences**

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**Thomas E. Baca, MPH**  
**4508 Jenny Lane**  
**Flower Mound, Texas 75028-3979**  
**972-724-2818**

September 29, 2006  
Honorary Degree Committee  
Office of the Secretary  
Scholes Hall, Room 103  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131

Dear Members of the Committee,

It is with a great deal of pride and honor that I whole-heartedly support the nomination of Larry J. Gordon for an honorary degree. Larry's accomplishments are legendary and are well delineated by others who have studied, examined and documented his monumental contributions to the fields of Public Health and Environmental Science in New Mexico and throughout the nation.

My remarks are more personal and reflect the feelings of Larry's many students. I first met Larry in 1964 when he hired me as a Sanitarian in the Albuquerque Health Department. Larry looked me in the eye at that first meeting and stated without equivocation that he wanted me to leave in three years and pursue a Masters of Public Health (MPH). At one point in time Larry had six of his employees pursuing their graduate degrees at the same time. Larry's office environment was clearly a classroom where one was expected to learn, innovate, progress and contribute to the Environmental field.

Larry's professional contributions were so profound that even today when I'm looking for ideas or guidance regarding difficult environmental problems, I read the many articles written by Larry. His prolific writings were the product of a brilliant mind. Larry was an optimist and was only frustrated by individuals seeking their own gain and recognition. Larry's love of New Mexico was profound and he used the state as a laboratory in showing other states what was necessary to protect and enhance the natural environment.

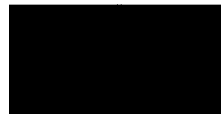
Larry led every organization that he ever directed to greatness and national recognition. His progressive approaches were copied, used and talked about throughout the Public Health community. His reputation as a progressive leader brought invitations to speak, solicitations to serve on important national committees and job offers from organizations seeking change. He received invitations to serve on many accreditation evaluation teams from the prestigious academic institutions in the country. His sole goal remained the improvement of public health and environmental enhancement.

In my mind's eye, Larry is Mr. Environmental Professional; a consummate thinker and innovator, a leader in every sense of the word, a writer and change agent, a spell-binding speaker, a record setter, a historian, a family man and a personal friend. If there is truly a unique New Mexico professional and dedicated servant who is deserving of recognition by the University, it is Larry J. Gordon.

Thank you for considering this nomination. Please contact me if you need additional information concerning this endorsement.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Baca



**The University of New Mexico**

Office of the Dean

College of Arts and Sciences MSC03 2120  
1 University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001  
(505) 277-3046

Sept. 28, 2006

Honorary Degree Committee  
Office of the Secretary  
University of New Mexico

I am pleased to support the nomination of Larry J. Gordon for an honorary degree. Professor Deborah McFarlane has written an elegant statement making the nomination and the Chair of Political Science, Mark Peceny, is also sending a letter of support. Gordon has made critical contributions to improving the standards for public health across New Mexico - particularly being willing to take on public interests in the face of industry opposition. He is a remarkable citizen and a credit to the University and the state,

Sincerely,



Vera Norwood  
Interim Dean  
Arts and Sciences



9/28/06

The University of New Mexico  
Department of Political Science  
MSCOS 3070  
1 University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001  
Telephone (505) 277-5104

Honorary Degree Committee Office  
of the Secretary University of New  
Mexico

Dear Committee Members:

I endorse with great enthusiasm the nomination of Larry Gordon for an honorary degree. Few have done more to improve the health of New Mexicans over the past 50 years or to advance the academic study of public health nationally and internationally. The . University of New Mexico should recognize his extraordinary contributions by awarding him an honorary degree.

Sincerely,



Mark Peceny  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Political Science

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**University of New Mexico**  
**Political Science Department**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87131**

**Fred R. Harris, Professor Emeritus**

**October 3, 2006**

**Vivian Valencia**  
**University Secretary**  
**MSC OS 3340**  
**University of New Mexico**  
**Albuquerque, NM 87131**


**Re: Larry Gordon**

**I am pleased to endorse the nomination of Larry Gordon for a UNM honorary degree. I know him well, have worked with him, and have observed him over time, and I think there is nobody more deserving of this honor and recognition.**

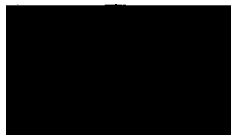
**Larry Gordon has had a brilliant career of public service, teaching, and writing - for example as NM Cabinet Secretary for Health and Environment, as President of the American Public Health Association, as an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at UNM, and as the author of more than 240 professional and technical publications.**

**Larry Gordon has been a great credit to our country, to New Mexico, and to UNM. And our recognizing this by awarding him an honorary degree would in my opinion be most fitting and appropriate.**

**Sincerely,**



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**The University of New Mexico**  
**Department of Economics**

**MSCOS 3060  
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Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001  
Telephone (505) 277-5304  
FAX (505) 277-9445**

**September 27, 2006**

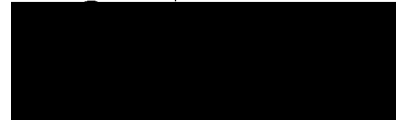
**Honorary Degree Committee  
Office of the Secretary  
University of New Mexico**

**Dear Committee Members:**

**It is an honor to support the nomination of Larry J. Gordon for an honorary degree. I was fortunate to know Larry Gordon as a colleague at the University of New Mexico. During his tenure at the University of New Mexico, he provided valuable leadership and mentorship to faculty and students. He has an outstanding record of scholarship and public service in education and health. His contributions have made a significant difference to the quality of health in the New Mexico and the nation. He is an excellent candidate to be considered for an honorary degree from the University of New Mexico.**

**I am delighted to know that Larry Gordon is being nominated for an honorary degree at the University of New Mexico. An honorary degree for Larry Gordon will advance the educational and public service mission of the University.**

**Thank you for considering this nomination.**



**Richard Santos, Associate Professor of Economics and College of Pharmacy  
Undergraduate Director, Combined BA/MD Program  
College of Arts and Sciences**

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**NM  
STATE**

**UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
Office of the Dean**

MSC 3AD  
New Mexico State University  
P. O. Box 30001  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001  
Phone: 505-646-2821

November 14, 2006

Honorary Degree Committee  
Office of the Secretary  
Scholes Hall, Room 103  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87131

Dear Members of the Committee:

It is with pleasure that I support the nomination of Mr. Larry J. Gordon, MS, MPH for an honorary degree. Larry served as Cabinet Secretary for Health and Environment during the first two years of my tenure as Governor of New Mexico. One would be hard pressed to find someone more dedicated to the well being of New Mexicans than Larry Gordon. Larry's long history of service begins in my favorite profession, a teacher of high school students. Though the years, his journey has taken him through many years of effort in countless venues, always seeking to improve the human health condition.

Bestowing of an honorary degree is a fitting tribute to Larry Gordon's long history of service.

Sincerely,

