

On 15 March 2015 Dr. Álvaro Espinosa, awarded in 2009 a lifetime achievement award by this Institution in recognition of his services, passed away in Boulder, Colorado (USA).

Dr. Espinosa, a native of Barranquilla, arrived in 1953 at Saint Louis University (Missouri), where studied geophysical engineering. He subsequently specialized in seismology and Geology at both Saint Louis and Columbia University (New York), where he was awarded his MSC degree in Seismology & Mathematics and Geology, Geomorphology and Oceanography respectively. A number of years later he was awarded his Doctor of Science degree at the Complutense University of Madrid.

His first steps as a researcher were taken in the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory at the University of Columbia, after which he occupied important posts in the US NOAA and, finally until his retirement, in the US Geological Survey in Golden (Colorado).

His long scientific career and his profound knowledge of geosciences enabled him to work successfully in fields such as seismological instrumentation, seismicity and seismic risk and hazard, and much of his work was reflected in the extraordinary number of research articles he published in top international journals throughout his career. It is worth to mention because its world relevance, the publication of the Seismicity of the Earth Map which was adopted in the 15th edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica.

Nevertheless, the most outstanding feature of his career was the time he devoted to working with the developing countries that requested his help in the development of Earth sciences in their countries being consulted by the UN, Department of State. Similarly he was consulted also by different international organizations such as OAS, US-AID and CERESIS. Dr. Espinosa provided scientific help and promoted technology transfer in a number of Latin American countries and in Spain, where from 1984 onwards he headed a geophysical, tectonophysical and seismic engineering cooperation project with the Complutense University of Madrid. Of particular importance was his work with the Spanish National Geographical Institute on the development of the first telemetric digital seismic network in Spain, the agreement with NASA for transferring satellite images, and the support he received from the former National Bureau of Standards for the creation of the Spanish Metrological Institute, which hitherto had been part of the National Geographic Institute. In 2009, the García Siñeriz Foundation awarded Dr. Espinosa a lifetime achievement award in recognition of the work in the abovementioned fields, as well as for his pedagogical work and his support for Earth science research in Spain.

Dr. Espinosa's intense collaboration with us went beyond the limits of a simple agreement and reached an extraordinary level of commitment. We were always made to feel welcome in his house in Sunshine Canyon during the numerous visits we made to him during our many collaborations with the USGS.

The death of Dr. Espinosa represents not just the loss of a dedicated researcher into the most social aspects of seismology but also the loss of a great friend and lover of our country, where he always felt at home. As a colleague, he was always ready to help promote the transfer of fundamental technological and scientific knowledge from his country to ours.

We would like to extend our most sincere condolences to Dr. Espinosa's widow, Eugenia, as well as his nine children, 13 grandchildren and his sister Rebeca. We loved Álvaro very deeply and share the pain of his loss with all of his family. All of us who knew him have you in our thoughts at this difficult moment.

Julio Mezcua Rodríguez

President of Fundación J. García Siñeriz