

The 1995 Preston E. James Eminent Latin Americanist Career Award



César N. Caviedes

I am very pleased that the CLAG Honors Committee accepted my nomination of **César N. Caviedes** for the Preston E. James Eminent Career Latin Americanist Award. My nomination stemmed from knowing César for 15 years. He served as my dissertation supervisor at the University of Florida from 1980-85. I had the good fortune to be his student in the conventional classroom as well as in lengthy field courses in Bolivia, Chile and Uruguay. One of the highlights of my education as a geographer was sitting in a large salt flat (*pampa*) in the Atacama Desert and listening to César recount the works of Mark Jefferson and other geographers who re-assembled the settlement patterns of Aymara-speaking peoples along trails linking oases to oases; he pointed out that Pedro de Valdivia followed those same trails when he entered Chile from Peru. I am reminded that such outdoor lectures were really fun, and I need to get back to that kind of learning soon.

I have since followed his career at professional meetings, in the geographical and social-science literature of the Southern Cone, and through careful reading of his published works. Cesar N. Caviedes embodies the spirit of the classic renaissance scholar. He is, truly, a "jack of all trades", as evidenced by his command of various methodological approaches, epistemologies, and languages (spoken and written) and by the range of his scholarly audiences. He finds disciplinary boundaries bothersome. Although his dissertation examined geomorphologic processes in the Aconcagua Valley in Chile, he crossed over into political and social geography while a junior faculty member at the University of Regina. He has written often and well in his mother tongue (Spanish), as well as in German, Italian, French, English, and Portuguese. (The clucking of German in his home and the graceful switch to Spanish and English are uncanny sounds I will always remember.)

A review of his published works shows that he is equally adept at discussing seemingly unrelated issues. For example, he has debated (in print) the causes of the Southern Oscillation with high-tech GIS researchers. He engages in scholarly exchanges with archivists who document precipitation in the Atacama Desert and with political scientists who approach electoral politics aspatially. He never backs away from good, honest, intellectual debate.

His published record is stellar: seven books, nineteen book chapters, and more than fifty refereed journal articles. Scholarly audiences range from the traditional geographic venues (the *Professional Geographer*, *CLAG Yearbook*, *Geoforum*, *Die Erde*, *Erdkunde*, *GeoJournal*, the *Geographical Review* to equally prestigious outlets beyond

mainstream [end p. 107] geography journals (*Latin American Research Review*, *Disasters*, *Natural History*, *Journal of Hydrology*, *Journal of Glaciology*). Such scholarship has earned him membership on the editorial boards of a half-dozen internationally renowned publications.

The effectiveness of his life-long commitment to Latin-Americanist geography is noted in the Social Science Citation Index. His published research (in English only, mind you) has been cited about 40 times annually over the past decade. I suspect his contributions to the natural sciences would also be evident in comparable citation sources. Curiously, he is one of the few Latin Americans (though he is legally Canadian) actively engaged in CLAG. Caviedes' work is not confined to a parochial group of scholars. In every South American country where I have worked (all of them, except the Guianas), I have never met a geographer who did not know the work of César N. Caviedes. (I pass this on as a tip: mention his name if you need contacts in a new research setting). He is also extremely tolerant of North Americans learning the ropes of foreign-area scholarship.

Like Preston James, Caviedes induces young geographers to do their best work. César encourages a happy union between the 'buddy knowledge' crowd and armchair scholars. Underlying most of his work is an interdisciplinary focus on the relationship between human behavior and the environment and state-civil relationships. In the former area, read his earlier work in the natural sciences (e.g., the persisting ecological constraints of tropical agriculture). In the latter (e.g., elections in Chile, The politics of Chile, The Southern Cone, South America) he has placed regional geography in comparative and theoretical contexts. I await with interest the publication of his Dellplain manuscript on the German and Berkeley schools of geography. Given his research and teaching in Europe and North America, I believe this work will chart the most important intellectual courses taken by Latin Americanist geography in this century.

Cesar N. Caviedes works with both young and seasoned scholars. Apart from a half dozen doctoral students at Florida, he has also collaborated with physical geographers (Peter Weyland) and human ecologists (Gregory Knapp). This interface between the social and natural sciences has produced some of the finest research in CLAG. Yet he has a deep, abiding respect for the work of our predecessors. He has built well on the work of his dissertation supervisor at Freiburg, Wolfgang Wieschet, who was strongly influenced by Carl Sauer.

Good cheer and collegiality characterize his scholarly relationships. He abhors dilettantes and has deliberately opted for committee and administrative work. Caviedes's camaraderie and commitment to service include work at universities (Chairs of Geography Departments in Valparaiso and Florida), within CLAG (Director, vice-president and chair of several committees), and with the Florida Society of Geographers (President). Although Cesar told me point blank upon the receipt of my doctorate a decade ago that I could *tutearle*, I still feel compelled to revert to the old Ud., out of a genuine respect for him as a scholar and *caballero*. It is with respect and pride that the Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers bestows this honor on Don César.

Joseph Scarpaci [end p. 108]