

## 2008 UCGIS Educator Award

The Award Subcommittee of the UCGIS Education Committee is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2008 UCGIS Education Award is **Dr. Michael Phoenix**, of Redlands, California.



Dr. Phoenix retired in 2008 from his long-term position as *Manager of Education Industry Solutions* at ESRI. This prosaic title did little justice to the major role he played for many years as a vocal and effective advocate for the expansion of college, university and K-12 educational activities in the areas of GIS and geographic science. His dynamic and effective approach to the encouragement and enhancement of these activities was not confined to institutions within the United States but also embraced those in many other parts of the world. His extensive overseas experience, including two years in Peru as a Peace Corps volunteer, created a particular interest in the problems faced by educational institutions in developing nations.

As an important part of his educational efforts, he arranged support for and actively participated in many of the initial specialist meetings on GIS and geographic science education. On an individual institutional level he has worked tirelessly as a champion to establish and strengthen many local GIS and geographic science programs, not only through encouraging words at the administrative level but also by making substantial gifts of software and training and working to provide university-wide access to new spatial analysis and mapping tools through affordable site licences. In addition to the larger educational picture, he is known for his strong interest in individual educators and their concerns. As noted in a letter supporting his nomination:

I believe that one of the reasons for his exceptional success was that he always made time to exchange ideas with individual educators. For example, I visited ESRI several times over the last few years and came to his office unannounced.

On each occasion, he found time to sit and talk with me about my work, my classes, and my students. He would always ask what he might be able to do to support me better and he followed through on my requests. I believe that it was this type of personal interaction - working with professors and educators directly - that made him so successful at what he did.

Dr. Phoenix received his BS degree in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts and, after serving in several overseas positions, his Ph.D. in Geography from Clark University.

Members of the UCGIS 2008 Award Subcommittee included past award winners Duane Marble (Chair), David Unwin (University of London) and Marc Armstrong (University of Iowa).