

**Call for Nominations**  
**James J. Parsons Award for Excellence in Thesis Research**

**Background**

Dr. James J. Parsons was one of the world's most honored cultural geographers. He served on the faculty of the Geography Department at the University of California-Berkeley from 1945 until he passed away in 1997. During those 52 years, Jim Parsons conducted field research in over 40 countries, focusing much of his time in Latin America and Spain where he studied a wide array of topics within the "human/land tradition" of geography such as marine green turtles, coffee agroforestry, Miskito Coast pine savannas, acorns and hogs, cork oak forests, biodiversity of the Canary Islands, national parks, environmental conservation, and much more. He chaired 38 PhD committees and countless master theses. Jim traveled and published extensively. His many honors and awards include a Guggenheim, AAG Honors, the Berkeley Citation, two gold medals for research from the government of Colombia, and the *Trabajador de la Cultura* medal from the *Instituto de Integración Cultural* in Colombia. Jim served as President of the Association of American Geographers and Chair of the Center of Latin American Studies. His research exemplifies the "Berkeley School of Geography" which integrates field work, historical geography, cultural geography, land tenure studies, biogeography, cultural landscapes, and conservation. This is not surprising since Jim's PhD advisor was Dr. Carl O. Sauer, founder of the Berkeley School itself.

In 1989, Dr. Jack Wright established the Parsons Award for Excellence in Thesis Research to recognize and honor the contributions of Dr. Parsons who served as his PhD advisor and became his dear friend.

**Qualifications for the Award** – The award seeks to recognize excellent Geography Graduate Students at NMSU according to the following criteria:

- Thesis research must be in the areas of cultural geography, environmental geography, biogeography, and/or land conservation with a strong reliance on field work,
- Excellence in coursework as recognized by high marks in Geography and related fields, and
- Personal commitment to environmental conservation and cultural sensitivity.

**Submission and review process** – Nominations for this award should be made to the NMSU Department of Geography Awards Committee (MSC MAP in Campus Mail) no later

than 15 April 2009. If a Parson's Award winner is selected, the student will be notified prior to the Spring Awards Luncheon where a certificate and a \$100 cash award will be given.

Geography Graduate Students who wish to be considered for this award should submit a short narrative that includes the following:

- Identifies the student being nominated and notes their academic qualifications,
- Describes the student's interest in the areas of Geography described above and their desire to make contributions in one or more of these areas, and
- Provides the title of the Masters Thesis research topic and very briefly outlines the project.