

Memorial to Lawrence A. Warner 1914–1991

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The career of one of America's most versatile geologists closed with the death of Lawrence A. Warner on December 20, 1991. After 44 years devoted to geological science, including 35 years as a faculty member at the University of Colorado, Larry Warner retired in 1981. His remaining years were devoted chiefly to his many other interests, including English composition, at which he was uncommonly skilled.

Larry Warner was born April 20, 1914, in Monroe, Ohio, "smack on top of the Cincinnati arch" as he put it. Intending to major in English at Miami University, he was assigned a job as a student helper for the young geology professor Bennett T. Sandefur; he soon found himself captivated by earth science, which became his principal field. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Miami in 1937. That summer, working alone with improvised mapping methods, he completed his first geological study: a report on the geology of Versailles State Park in south-eastern Indiana.

While engaged in Ph.D. studies at Johns Hopkins University, Larry worked with U.S. Geological Survey mapping projects in Colorado during the summers of 1938 and 1939. At a high-country camp in the San Juan Mountains, he received news of his appointment as a geologist with the third U.S. Antarctic Expedition then being organized by Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Working from Little America (a very primitive camp by today's standards), he and his colleagues evaluated much previously unexplored Antarctic terrain during the austral summers of 1939–1940 and 1940–1941. He received his Ph.D. degree in geology from Johns Hopkins University in 1942.

Larry Warner worked with the Alaskan Branch of the U.S. Geological Survey from 1942 to 1946, carrying on pioneering studies of geology and mineral resources in southern Alaska, and on Alaska's arctic slope. His field work in Earth's two polar regions was recognized in 1946 by award of the Congressional Medal for Science and Exploration.

Withdrawing from the U.S. Geological Survey in the fall of 1946, Larry began a distinguished career as a faculty member in the Department of Geology and Geography at the University of Colorado in Boulder. There his remarkably broad scientific skills led him, over the years, into teaching general geology, mineralogy, petrology, field geology, mine mapping, photogeology, economic geology, structural geology, regional tectonics, tectonophysics, engineering geology, and environmental geology.

Larry's teaching was distinguished for thoroughness combined with friendliness and human understanding. He is remembered with affection by hundreds of former students and professional colleagues. During his university career he also contributed to the work of many committees, as well as to special programs in geological education sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the American Geological Institute. In 1963 the University of Colorado presented him with the Stearns Award for University Service.

During his academic career Larry Warner also carried on U.S. Geological Survey research on beryllium minerals for six years and geological studies for an Air Force project in arctic Alaska for four years. For 25 years he was employed as a consultant by the Denver Board of Water Commissioners for studies of the wide variety of dams, conduits, and tunnels constructed to develop the metropolitan water supply.

Reflecting his wide-ranging intellectual capabilities, Larry was not only a Fellow of GSA, but a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Xi, American Geophysical Union, National Association of Geology Teachers, Colorado Scientific Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Association of Engineering Geologists. Larry Warner will be remembered by a myriad of friends, in and out of the geological profession, as a courteous gentleman who was always quietly doing kind services for them. The humanity he conveyed to those who knew him must be reckoned along with his scientific and educational work as a precious heritage.

Larry Warner's immediate surviving family consists of his wife Robin of Boulder, his son Gary of Liberty, Missouri, and his daughter Susan of Taos, New Mexico.

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