

# The nation's health, october-november 1987 **APHA Annual Awards** **Gordon Is Sedgwick Winner**

Larry J. Gordon, MS, MPH, who is the Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health and Environment, has been chosen as APHA's Sedgwick Memorial Medal Winner for 1987.

The Sedgwick is APHA's oldest and most prestigious continuing award. Gordon is known for an entire series of accomplishments in creating model environmental health agencies at the state and local level during his 37-year career in New Mexico health agencies.

In the 1950s, and 1960s in Albuquerque, he designed, recommended the creation of, and directed the nation's first local environmental health department. He is honored for broadening that agency's mission to include not only traditional environmental sanitation but also the safety and well-being of people and the health of future generations of people.

After he was appointed Director of the Environmental Services Division of the state health department in 1968, Gordon recommended the creation of, gained legislative approval for, and organized the state Environmental Improvement Agency. And, again, he expanded the agency's range of environmental programs and enhanced internal program functioning, public information, staff training and career development.

Beginning in 1973 Gordon led in the creation of and directed the New Mexico Scientific Laboratory System, which serves a wide variety of local state and federal programs.

In 1976, Gordon became state Administrator for Health and Environmental Programs and he was successful in his work for legislation establishing the New Mexico Health and Environment Department. He was Deputy Secretary of that department from 1978 to 1982.

In 1981 Gordon also served as president of APHA.

Beginning in 1982, Gordon again took over as Director of the Albuquerque Environmental Health Department, and among other accomplishments there he promoted development of a municipal hazardous waste program and he wrote the "Guide to the Role of Local Health Officials in the Local Management of Hazardous Waste."

At the first of this year Gordon was asked by the current Governor of New Mexico to come back to the state Health and Environment Department, to be the Secretary.

A colleague wrote, "Through Mr. Gordon's advocacy and guidance, New Mexico now has local and state environmental agencies, a state scientific laboratory system, the state health services division, and a number of environmental health, air quality and environmental improvement advisory and regulatory boards, all of which continue to serve as national models for other state and local governments."