

ADOT Mourns the Loss of GIS Pioneer

If you've ever called up ADOT with a GIS question, or even something vaguely relating to GIS for that matter, you probably spoke to Tony Gonzales. Tony was a pioneer for GIS in ADOT.

Tony began his ADOT career in 1972 as an Engineering Aid collecting traffic data, inventorying the state highway system and making various charts, reports and maps. He soon was promoted to the ranks of Transportation Planner where he developed his programming skills by designing programs to collect road geometrics and condition data as well as programs to inventory Arizona's 50,000 plus miles of roadway.

In the late 1980's Tony discovered GIS. He had created several maps of the state highway system using AutoCAD. However, while CAD is an excellent tool for roadway designers, for planners it was lacking the ability for spatial analysis, which is one of the key benefits of GIS. Thus, Tony began the tedious process of converting all his AutoCAD maps into a GIS System.

Tony soon became the department's advocate for GIS. He served as ADOT's representative to the Arizona Geographic Information Council (AGIC), a council set up by Governor's Executive Order to guide the development and management of GIS in Arizona. He taught ADOT and other government employees how to use the ArcView GIS software. He was the GIS Project Leader, supervising the GIS staff and managing various GIS projects.

Tony was also determined to complete his bachelor's degree. He managed to attend classes at ASU in between running the GIS section at ADOT and spending time with his family. In May of 2000 he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Geography.

And that was just his accomplishments at ADOT. Outside of work, he spent a lot of time with his wife, Nancy, and their two young children, Becky and Daniel. They loved to fish and camp together. The family was planning on moving to a small rural town when Tony's illness began to take its toll.

Tony suffered from a condition known as neurofibromatosis. Neurofibromatosis (NF) is a genetic disorder which cause tumors to grow along various types of nerves and, in addition, can affect the development of non-nervous tissues such as

bones and skin. NF causes tumors to grow anywhere on or in the body. (More information about NF can be found on the National NF Foundation website at www.nf.org).



Tony Gonzales
January 12, 1947—April 7, 2001

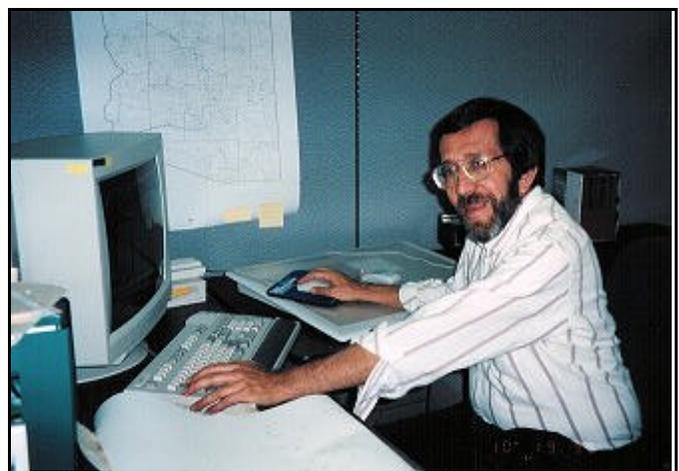
Tony was GIS in ADOT. He had a quiet determination and unending drive and passion for GIS. He has left a lasting mark on ADOT through his work. We will never forget him.

Editor's note: Tony was a true pioneer. He was my mentor and a dear friend. He taught me so many things—I will forever be grateful for his kindness, his faith and his friendship.

"Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for awhile, leave footprints in our hearts and we are never the same."



Tony receiving the Employee of the Quarter award in July 1990. With him in this photo are Dale Buskirk (left) and Lou Schmidt (right).



Tony at his workstation, doing what he liked best—just making maps!