

## **Vaupel Elected to National Academy NAS considered one of the highest honors in science**

Friday, April 23, 2004 | James Vaupel, a senior research scientist in the Terry Sanford Institute and an internationally known demographer, was one of 90 researchers from around the world elected April 20 to the National Academy of Sciences.

Membership in the national academy -- a private, congressionally authorized organization that acts as an official adviser to the federal government -- is considered one of the highest honors in science and engineering. The election occurred during the 141st annual meeting of the academy.

Vaupel is also founding director of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, Germany. At Duke, he works in the Sanford Institute's Program on Population, Policy and Aging.

His demographic study has affected national policy discussions on a number of topics, particularly policies related to aging, life expectancy and mortality rates. In June 2003, Vaupel testified before a U.S. Senate committee that despite slowing health progress for older Americans, life expectancy in the United States will continue to increase. His findings have significant implications for Social Security and other federal expenditures related to aging.

Vaupel's previous research concluded that the lifespans of people in developed nations are increasing at a remarkably constant rate, suggesting that there is no natural limit on life expectancy.

He received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1978 and came to Duke as an assistant professor in 1972. He left Duke in 1985 for a position at the University of Minnesota, but returned as a senior research scientist in 1992. He became the first director of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in 1996.

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