

"REMEMBER McDONALD"

By Ann Druffel (MUFON, California, and FSR Consultant.)

This article appeared in the *International UFO Reporter* (the journal established by the late Dr. J. Allen Hynek), September/October 1993 issue, Vol. 18, No. 5, and in December we were surprised to receive a sudden note from Ann Druffel informing us that she hoped that we would be able to find room for it in FSR too, and that she had already obtained the consent of Mr. Mark Rodeghier of the *I.U.R.* for us to have it. This was very welcome news, and we take the opportunity to express our thanks to both Mrs. Druffel and Mr. Rodeghier, for we ourselves have never forgotten the vigorous role played by the great American scientist James McDonald, and we are sure that many of our older readers also had much respect and affection for him.

What I am now saying here does not mean that I do not realize that in some respects Dr. Hynek was indeed a disaster so far as our cause was concerned, for in my opinion he was *appallingly timid*. I am sure that he did perceive and did understand a great deal more than he was prepared to state publicly. But he feared his scientific peers and no doubt feared for the security of his official post. *And I agree that, had he possessed the courage and the dynamism of McDonald there would indeed have probably been a good deal more achieved by now.*

While I support completely Mrs. Druffel's thesis that McDonald was, (so far as I am able to judge) unquestionably the most impressive of the American scientists who are known *publicly* to have made a deep study of "our subject", I have to add that I do not share McDonald's confidence — as well as Ann's confidence — that human science is going to get the better of the UFO conundrum. I don't think so for one moment, and I prefer to remember what Dr. Hynek himself said to me several times, namely that "if the floor of *their* science is higher than the ceiling of *our* science, then it may well be that there will be no meeting of minds."

I would add I am not so sure either that McDonald's suicide was not due to something other than family and domestic problems — as we have always been told. For his death has not been the only mysterious one in our particular field of interest, and there are plenty of agencies around that kill, and kill without compunction. Some of those agencies are certainly "Governmental". But the others are "something else", and I'm not sure that this "something else" isn't in the driving-seat here. EDITOR.

A recent article of tribute by Walter Webb to Dr. J. Allen Hynek (*IUR*, Jan/Feb '93, Vol. 18, No. 1), prompts me to write a companion tribute to the late Dr. James E. McDonald. Most people in the UFO research field know McDonald's name, but, proportionately, there are not many people still left in the field who knew and worked with him personally. Due to his early death in June 1971, at the age of 51, the field was deprived prematurely of a fearless and gifted fighter.

For an unforgettable five years, between 1966 and 1971, McDonald sought the truth about UFOs with a boldness and perseverance which the field had never before — nor since — experienced. His rare combination of interdisciplinary scientific knowledge, his countless contributions to the field of atmospheric physics, his numerous high-placed contacts in government, the military, and Science, permitted him to sound an heraldic call to those who might be able to "make a difference". He investigated the best UFO reports on-site, was friend and colleague to many lay researchers, and spoke innumerable times before prestigious scientific and governmental groups. He was listened to with respect everywhere he went. His main purpose: to convince the Scientific Establishment that UFOs should be studied seriously.

If Jim McDonald had lived out a normal life span, the UFO field today would be very different from the chaos into which it has been tossed. At the very least, we would very likely be *closer* to solving the puzzle of these enigmatic objects.

Recently, the publication of Jacques Vallée's *FORBIDDEN SCIENCE: JOURNALS 1957-1969* had, in a sense, re-introduced Dr. James McDonald to the field. This book, however, presents him in rather negative terms. I wish merely to present the other side of the controversy, so that those readers who did not know McDonald personally but yet are curious about him and his many accomplishments in the field might have a chance to see him as he was, and as his numerous friends, associates and colleagues knew him.

The rather negative light which Vallée's *JOURNALS* cast upon McDonald is probably due to the fact that Hynek was Vallée's mentor and friend. Perhaps Vallée — whose work I admire and applaud, and who has from the beginning relentlessly pursued the truth of UFOs — did not fully understand McDonald's intense nature — or his *modus operandi*, which even for a scientist was incredibly thorough. McDonald had, indeed, repeatedly challenged Dr. Hynek on various issues, usually not publicly, but mainly in conversation and corre-

spondence. Hynek, from 1948 to 1969, had been the official scientific consultant on Astronomy to Project Bluebook, and in this capacity had been instrumental in helping place the cover-up lid on the UFO subject. McDonald visited the Bluebook offices the first time in June 1966 and became suddenly aware of the stunning cases — hundreds of good UFO reports — which were being passed off as stars, meteors, and balloons.

McDonald saw with his own eyes how Hynek had let absurd explanations of intriguing cases pass by without bothering to investigate them. He therefore charged Hynek with contributing to what he himself called “the government foul-up” on the UFO problem, and of concealing the true extent of this serious scientific problem from the scientific community. The decades-long governmental neglect of UFOs, and Hynek’s role in this (through 1968, at least) thoroughly irritated him and offended his sense of honesty and fair play. The controversy between the two men lasted for the rest of McDonald’s life although, in public, they managed to present a cordial appearance toward each other from about 1969 on.

James E. McDonald was Senior Physicist at the Institute for Atmospheric Physics (I.A.P.) at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and a professor of meteorology at that University. He was noted for his brilliance as a teacher, for his pioneering contributions to cloud physics and weather modification, and for his deep knowledge of adjoining fields of science. His mind was endlessly inquisitive: he made adventurous forays into any subject which happened to capture his interest, such as the physics of baseball and tennis and the shape of raindrops. He also spoke out vigorously on more serious subjects, such as the insanity of ringing American cities with anti-ballistic missiles. His all-out attack on this problem in the early sixties finally convinced the government that placing defensive missile silos downwind would at least prevent mass civilian deaths due to radioactive fallout in the event of a nuclear war. He also spoke out boldly against the war in Vietnam and especially against the use of napalm and other chemical weapons.

McDonald’s last contribution to the field of atmospheric physics, in March 1971, was his logical but impassioned argument, at a public Congressional hearing, against government funding for fleets of supersonic transports (SSTs), which at the time were being proposed to phase out conventional jet airliners. He had studied the problem carefully and had concluded that fleets of SSTs, overflying the American continent, would damage the fragile ozone layer and cause thousands of additional cases of skin cancer each year. He was one of the very few scientists to speak out in the early 1970s about problems in the ozone layer, and his prediction of increasing skin cancer rates has already come to pass.

McDonald, as described by Vallée, had seemed “to burst upon the UFO scene” in June 1966. Actually, his entrance into the field was far from sudden. Between the years 1958-1965, he had quietly made an eight-year private study of Arizona UFO reports, and had served as a scientific consultant to NICAP before he ever spoke out

publicly on the subject. He was the first eminent scientist to work closely with objective civilian research organizations in a common goal — that of convincing government and science of the urgent necessity to take the problem of UFOs seriously. He was a family man, with three children in universities and college and three more in high school. In spite of his personal responsibilities, however, after becoming convinced that UFOs did, indeed, present a serious scientific problem, he publicly went out on a limb, disregarding the professional and financial risks involved.

McDonald’s nature was intense, and he spoke out bluntly whenever he felt the situation called for it. It was these characteristics that Dr. Hynek felt so keenly. However, with his friends and family, McDonald was a charming and congenial man with a unique, sometimes impish, sense of humor. During his eight quiet years of studying Arizona reports, from 1958 through 1965, he became known to the public as an eminently approachable, courteous professional who did not laugh at their UFO reports but, instead, doggedly studied each report which came to his attention. This was done in his own spare time, and he found conventional answers to most reports, as all good researchers do. Those he could not explain puzzled him deeply, until he came to realize that mystifying cases were occurring worldwide.

McDonald was, above all, that type of rare scientist who was acutely aware of the public’s right to know. He felt that Science existed to serve the public, not to live in ivory towers. This philosophy prompted him to write prolifically on numerous scientific questions, not only in highly technical, refereed journals, but also in semi-technical articles which any educated person could read and understand. He also contributed clearly-written articles — often tinged with humor — on scientific subjects in the popular press. No matter in what media he wrote, his writing style was clear and fluid. His command of the English language and grammar rivalled any writer’s. His vocabulary was limited only by what was between the covers of the dictionary. He was truly a layman’s scientist.

Numerous colleagues in Physics and related branches of Science, as well as lay UFO researchers, appreciated McDonald’s untiring effort to break down military and governmental resistance to studying the UFO question seriously. It was during the McDonald years — 1966-1971 — that many scientists for the first time joined in the effort to make the subject of UFOs an “acceptable” field of study. But few could keep up with him. McDonald lived fast. His speech and movements were often hurried, as if the physical were laboring to keep up with his remarkable, racing mind. He had an encyclopaedic memory, and could pull out the details of any one of the hundreds of cases he had worked on at a moment’s notice.

I knew Jim McDonald personally because of my association with the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee (LANS), which was headed by Idabel Epperson. The Committee’s lively meetings at the Epperson home included virtually every scientist in the Los Angeles area

who dared show interest in the subject. McDonald visited Los Angeles from time to time, stopping over whenever he could in his incessant travels, and a meeting was always planned at such opportunities to allow ufologists and scientists in the area to exchange information and ideas with him.

He was a friend to many UFO investigators and scientists in the L.A. area. He showed deep interest in many cases which were investigated and documented in Southern California, such as the Heflin photo case — on which LANS conducted a six-year investigation — and in the Redlands case which was bird-dogged by a team from the University of Redlands. He was interested in the Yorba Linda photo case and the China Lake sightings. He was also intrigued by the element of “missing time” experienced by a civilian who lived on the perimeter of the China Lake Naval Base where sightings repeatedly occurred. His interest in good cases from all over the U.S. and in foreign countries was unlimited: his personal investigations were limited only by the boundaries of his time, energy and funding.

During his brief five public years in the field, he seemed on the verge of convincing the scientific community that UFOs must be studied worldwide. Although there had always been a few scientists who, from the beginning of the modern UFO era, publicly spoke out, none were as prominent, or accomplished so much as McDonald. He gave numerous papers at prestigious scientific conferences where UFOs had formerly been a laughable or forbidden subject. He was quoted often in the media, TV, radio and press. He travelled to various foreign countries where he met the same intense interest from scientists and lay researchers alike.

He was welcomed everywhere he went, shoving admiration and awe aside, for these were not what he was seeking. What he sought was the Truth, and he listened carefully to anyone with competence in any professional field who had proper objectivity and the ability to research UFO reports competently. Many lay researchers were among his friends. His regard for Major Donald E. Keyhoe — the real “dean of UFO research” — for Dick Hall, Idabel Epperson, Isabel Davis, Walter Webb, Gordon Lore, Ted Bloecher and numerous other researchers was deep and sincere. He received from them much of the information he researched — good cases which had been competently investigated and which he re-investigated so diligently, and he shared what he found with all who asked whether layman, scientist, military or governmental.

Some of the scientists who worked with him did so subrosa, for many faced loss of governmental grants, or loss of their jobs in government-funded aerospace corporations. Others simply were fearful of peer pressure, or of lack of credibility for publicly displaying interest in UFOs. There were exceptions, of course, like Dave Saunders and Norman Levine.

In contrast to experts like Donald E. Keyhoe, Richard Hall and others in NICAP who, even in the early days of ufology, subscribed to the theory that government was deliberately covering up data, McDonald, at least

publicly, never seemed convinced of this. He preferred to explain government’s incredible neglect of the UFO question as a “grand foulup” or bureaucratic bungling, even when he was denied access to dozens of radar-visual UFO cases in Bluebook files, due to their classified status. He combed through Bluebook files four times between 1966 and 1969. After Dr. Edward Condon finished his hatchet job and the Air Force gave up its public UFO query, these radar-visual files were finally declassified and McDonald promptly copied them.

These R-V cases occupied a considerable amount of time toward the end of his life. He was of the opinion that, if properly analyzed by competent experts, they might provide valuable data, because radar-visual cases, up to that point in time, constituted the closest thing to empirical evidence that seemed possible to obtain. To McDonald’s mind, R-V cases could provide physical evidence — documented proof — that unidentified, metallic aeroforms from unknown sources were invading Earth’s atmosphere.

McDonald’s death, to most people in the UFO field, was a mystery. This intrepid and apparently tireless man died by his own hand on 12 June 1971, at the height of his unprecedented success. Suspicions of governmental conspiracy abounded in the field; many were convinced, at first, that he had been silenced deliberately but slowly reason prevailed. His loss, nonetheless, took a terrible toll. Besides the personal loss to his family and to Science in general, the UFO research field lost its most effective leader and champion. Gone were his numerous contacts in science, government and the military. Gone was his persuasive voice and his unyielding search for empirical evidence and proof.

Although more scientists began to show open interest and to work publicly in the UFO field after McDonald’s death, it was never the same. We struggled on without him, never having a chance to properly mourn him, for none of us understood the reasons why he died.

Not many months afterward, reports of missing time and of abduction began to flood in, overwhelming UFO investigators still overwhelmed by his death. By 1973, the tenor of the field had subtly changed. No longer were unexplained *physical* objects the main focus; now “abduction” cases became dominant, presenting themselves to a still stunned field. We do not know why these close encounters — eventually termed CE IVs — took over the field at that particular time; most researchers accepted them merely as “a new phase”. It is impossible not to wonder what McDonald would have done about the plethora of such cases, which gradually increased until by the 1980s they were a virtual flood which could no longer be adequately investigated by available investigators.

As a consequence, a situation similar to the 1950s — the age of the contactees, which McDonald effectively fought and won — faces us today. McDonald had succeeded in wresting media attention away from the contactees and focussing it on objective UFO research. Contactee stories, it is true, were different in content from present-day wild stories which flood the field, but in the

fifties and sixties they presented an overwhelming problem to the small number of objective, scientifically-oriented researchers who were active at that time.

Now, contactee stories are practically extinct, but claims of alien implants, hybridization and genetic experimentation, missing fetuses, underground alien bases, secret cooperation of the U.S. military with aliens, and the like, run rampant. No solid, empirical evidence has yet been found to substantiate any of these reports, just as no proof was ever found for the oldtime contactee ravings. But there is a terrible difference. Today, claims of alien implants, missing fetuses, etc. are accepted wholesale by many prominent UFO researchers. To my mind, the situation is even more serious than the contactee problem faced by McDonald and his colleagues in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s.

The field has never been the same since McDonald left us. It lacks the piercing objectivity he brought to it, his demands for adequate investigation and *proof*. The search for documented proof drove McDonald. It constituted the main force behind his appeals for adequate governmental funding and proper attention to the subject by the scientific community. His hope was that some day science, government, and the public would participate together in a nationwide — and if possible international — tracking, monitoring and documenting network, somewhat similar to the U.S. Weather Service. His hope was that, with Science aroused and government convinced, such a project could be set up.

By such means, McDonald reasoned, the existence of UFOs, as physical craft of unknown origin, could be proven beyond the shadow of a doubt. After the proof of existence was established, the more theoretical problems of their nature and purpose(s) could be explored, for then the full force of human curiosity would be brought against them.

What might have happened if McDonald had lived out a normal lifespan? Would he have succeeded in breaking through the secrecy seal? Would the scientific community have continued the steps they were taking, calling for open discussion on UFOs at scientific conferences and symposia? Would the scientific community — hand-in-hand with objective lay investigators — have been able to start a general public demand that *all* UFO classified information in government possession be made freely available?

Is there another “James McDonald” somewhere out there, ready to take up the cudgel? Is it too much to hope that another, with the unique combination of knowledge, energy, enthusiasm, and the personal talents of mind and heart which Jim McDonald possessed, lives among us?

McDonald’s curiosity extended beyond the physical puzzle UFOs presented. He maintained an interest in early abduction cases such as Betty and Barney Hill’s. Time-loss cases, which were just beginning to surface, likewise intrigued him. He preferred, however, to leave public comment on such data to psychologists, for he felt that such cases had psychological implications which he

was unqualified to properly assess. By their very nature, apparently occurring in altered states of consciousness, it is possible that these incidents involve events beyond the monitoring capacity of physical science. James McDonald would have pointed this out and concentrated on proving the physical reality of the craft-like objects themselves.

It seems as if the UFO research field today no longer demands competent investigation or empirical evidence. UFO investigation today, in large part, consists of anecdotal data obtained through the dicey means of hypnotic regression. The attempts of a few researchers to prove the claim of “missing fetuses” have met with no success. The few “alien implants” which have been recovered turned out to have conventional explanations. Claims of “underground bases staffed by alien-military compatriots” exist in a shadow world. We struggle through a morass of ever-increasing complexity.

McDonald has never been replaced, and perhaps never will be. The least we can do, however, is this: *It is time to return to the scientific approach McDonald took, to seek incontrovertible proof that unidentified metallic aeroforms are invading Earth’s atmosphere.* This is a provable fact, if enough hard data can be gleaned from radar-visual cases, from satellite monitoring systems and the like. It was data like these that McDonald sought, and succeeding at least partially in finding. He also left us the basic *concept* by which adequate data could be obtained. Once incontrovertible proof of unidentified aeroforms was obtained, the full curiosity of scientists would be brought to the problem. After that, peripheral problems such as “occupant” sightings, UFO motives, etc. could then be fully explored.

McDonald’s voluminous files remained virtually intact, carefully guarded by his family; only a very few researchers have been permitted access to them since 1971. I have been given access to these files and to private journals he kept between 1966-1971, and for the past nine months have been researching them. Detailed information about McDonald’s contributions to the UFO field, and clarification of the last months of his life and death, will be the subject of a book — working title, *AFRAID OF NOTHING: UFOS AND THE DEATH OF DR. JAMES MCDONALD* — which will be finished within a year. ■

McDonald Bibliography

A 100 page bibliography of all known writings by James McDonald has been compiled and published by Valerie Vaughan, a librarian at the University of Massachusetts. The volume describes 231 articles, papers, and other materials, approximately 60 of which are UFO related.

Copies may be ordered for \$17.00 post-paid from Valerie Vaughan, 51, Longmead Drive, Amherst, MA 01002-3225

"SPACE ALIENS PINCHED MY PINEAPPLES!"

By Gordon Creighton

OVER the years we have seen quite a number of "UFO stories" that sounded so utterly ridiculous that it is not surprising if we find that not a soul anywhere seems prepared to believe them. I do not share that view, for the entire business with which we are concerned is such a farrago of nonsense, such a "festival of absurdity", as Aimé Michel was wont to say, that it seems to my mind somewhat unreasonable to segregate just one part of it as being more unacceptable than the rest. A year or so ago, for example, there was a report that a *circus elephant* (or possibly two) had been hoisted aboard a UFO and kidnapped. I think it was near Málaga, in Spain, and when I manage to turn the story up next time among the mountain of paper which once used to be my "in-tray" I will publish it.

The present tale concerns pineapples in Queensland, Australia. I know that Paul Norman has said that he doesn't believe a word of it. However, I recall, from the early days of FSR, quite a number of reports — particularly from Brazil — about alien critters who were seen purloining plants and fruits from the farmers' fields,⁽¹⁾ and a greedy liking for pineapples does not strike me as all that improbable.

The story was published in the Melbourne magazine *Picture Post* of June 8, 1991, and we thank FSR reader John Bainbridge of Leeton, Western Australia, for having sent it on to us.

As the *Picture Post* staff writer John Pinkney relates it, the story ran as follows.

A fuming Queensland farmer says UFO aliens stole 15,000 pineapple tops from his Sunshine Coast property.

Harry Roy, 73, of Calounra (Q), claims the snatch from Space ruined a season's planting — and cost thousands of dollars in lost profits.

The scene of the flying fruit raid was the sprawling Roy farm, which overlooks Bribie Passage. (Just N. of Brisbane, 27°00S.Lat., 152°59E.Long. Editor, FSR).

"I was working near the homestead one afternoon, some years back, when the earth was shaken by a series of huge thumps", Harry told me.

"Thinking there must have been an earthquake, I hurried over to my brother Gordon's house to ensure he was O.K.

"He'd heard the noises too and said he was sure they'd come from the back of the farm.

"We went down there with a local teacher, and discovered that 15,000 pineapple tops we'd readied for planting had vanished.

"There was no road into that part of the property

— and not even a helicopter could have entered undetected.

"I'm in no doubt that a UFO pinched those pineapples. For years they've been taking whatever they like from the farms around here. On several occasions they've even drained water from dams."⁽²⁾

"Locals believe the UFOs have a base inside the Glasshouse Mountains. They've been seen entering the Range — and the mountains often hum at night.

"I don't mind betting that my pineapple tops were planted somewhere in that base — far underground."

Harry Roy saw his first flying saucer in 1920, when he was six years old.

"It was a huge silver oval, wingless and silent", he recalled.

"I watched it hovering very low over our old top orchard — then it took off towards Nambour (26°38S.Lat., 153°00 E.Long. Ed.). Of course in those days I had no idea what a UFO was, but from that time on I kept seeing them — and finding their landing sites.

"In the 1930s, when I was moving cattle around the Bribie Passage saltmarsh country, I'd often find scorched circles up to 36 feet wide.

"They were a mystery to me until the 1950s, when all the flying saucer stories began to appear in the papers."

Harry's UFO encounters haven't just been long-distance sightings. He remembers a frightening brush with a seemingly alien entity.

"I awoke to find a man wearing a silver suit standing beside the bed", he recalled.

"I just lay there staring, unable to move or to call out to my wife, Irene. The man ran his hand through my hair, then went into the children's room. I was powerless to stop him. I'm pretty sure I've had other contacts that I can't remember.

"Several years ago, while riding a horse from Mill Ridge to Campbell's Mill, I lost three hours of time.

"I should have arrived at six, after a 20-minute journey, but I didn't get there till nine.

"My mate, who'd been waiting for me in his Vanguard ute, was in a deep sleep when I finally turned up.

"Neither of us could account for the missing time — but I'm sure we'd been taken somewhere".

Harry says he can "sense" the presence of UFOs.

"One day I was driving to Mooloolaba with my wife when I suddenly got the feeling I should stop the car", he said.

"I told her, 'The boys are up there somewhere — they'll appear any minute'. Then Irene replied, 'My God-you're right'.