“Hero for the Planet” to keynote School’s Foard Lecture in April 2009

William McDonough, an internationally renowned “green” architect and planner, will keynote the School’s 2009 Fred T. Foard Jr. Memorial Lecture on the evening of April 1, 2009. The lecture and accompanying reception will be held at the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education in Chapel Hill, N.C.

McDonough, a global leader in ecologically, socially and economically intelligent architecture and planning, was twice cited by TIME magazine—in October 2007 as a “Hero of the Environment” and in February 1999, as a “Hero for the Planet.”

Founding principal of McDonough + Partners, McDonough is one of the primary proponents and shapers of what he and his partners call “The Next Industrial Revolution.” He has lectured and written extensively on his design philosophy and practice, and in 2002, co-authored Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things with Michael Braungart.

In October 2007, McDonough brought his philosophy to North Carolina when he broke ground on a green mixed-use residential project in the heart of downtown Chapel Hill. The Greenbridge development will offer 98 residences, a retail area, green roofs, solar panels, rainwater runoff systems and a community learning center to teach sustainable living practices.

McDonough, a fellow of the American Institute of Architects, is an alumni research professor at the University of Virginia’s Darden Graduate School of Business Administration and a consulting professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University. He is the former dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia.

McDonough received the Presidential Award for Sustainable Development in 1996—the nation’s highest environmental honor. In 2003, he earned the U.S. EPA’s Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award, and in 2004 he received the National Design Award for exemplary achievement in the field of environmental design.

This year’s Foard lecture is co-sponsored by the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, the UNC Institute for the Environment, and Greenbridge Developments, LLC. The event is free, but registration is requested and can be completed at www.sph.unc.edu/foard or by calling (919) 966-0198.

Sobsey accepts International Water Association award

A team of researchers led by Dr. Mark Sobsey received the International Water Association’s 2008 Project Innovation Award for their research endeavor, “Ceramic Water Filters in Cambodia: A Sustainable Solution for Rural Drinking Water Treatment.” The project is one of the Gillings Innovation Laboratories at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

Sobsey, Kenan Distinguished University Professor of environmental sciences and engineering in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, accepted the honor at the Association’s East Asian and Pacific Awards Ceremony on June 26 in Singapore.

Dr. Joe Brown, a recent graduate of the UNC doctoral program in environmental sciences and engineering and current faculty member at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, proposed the original water purification project and worked with Sobsey and others to initiate and field-test it in Cambodian homes.
After successful testing, Sobsey, Brown and others established the Carolina Global Water Partnership, a research collaboration between UNC’s Gillings School of Global Public Health and its Kenan-Flagler Business School, which is exploring ways to commercialize household water treatment technologies in developing countries.

For more information, visit www.sph.unc.edu/news/sobsey.html.

Water filter project wins Kenan-Flagler Carolina Challenge

“Carolina Liquid Assets,” part of Carolina Global Water Partnership, run by a team of students from both the public health and business schools, took first prize in the 2008 Carolina Challenge entrepreneurial business-plan competition sponsored by the UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School.

The team won the $15,000 John Stedman Social Entrepreneurship Award for their business plan to manufacture and distribute ceramic water purifiers in Cambodia. They hope eventually to scale the operation throughout Southeast Asia and beyond.

Public health students and faculty took second prize, too. Applied Microproducts, Inc., won $7,500 in the competition’s commercial category. The company, developed by Environmental Sciences and Engineering Professor Dr. Frederic Pfaender, in conjunction with others, makes environmentally-friendly wood-treatment products for industry utility poles to replace the hazardous materials currently used.

For more information, visit www.sph.unc.edu/news/entrepreneurs.html.

School’s Nutrition Research Institute

The School’s Nutrition Research Institute (NRI) in Kannapolis, N.C., will celebrate the opening of a new 126,000-square-foot research center in November 2008. NRI researchers and staff moved into the new building in August. The new center houses state-of-the-art equipment that will allow NRI scientists to study how nutrition can enhance human health.

NRI, part of the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, is devoted to discovering why people differ greatly in metabolism and nutrient requirements. The institute uses cutting-edge genomic and metabolomic biotechnology to develop innovative approaches to understanding the role of diet and activity in normal brain development, in the prevention of cancer and in the prevention and treatment of obesity and eating disorders. Metabolomics is the systematic study of metabolites—small molecules generated in the process of metabolism.

“We have much of the methodology available that could allow us to understand why people’s metabolisms are so different,” says Dr. Steven Zeisel, NRI’s director and Kenan Distinguished University Professor of nutrition and pediatrics in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and the UNC School of Medicine.

NRI is located on the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis, about 25 miles northeast of Charlotte, N.C. The campus is a public-private partnership, spearheaded by David Murdock, owner and chairman of the board of Dole Food Company, Inc. The new center will house a metabolic kitchen, clinical facilities, a cognitive assessment suite, high-tech laboratories, office space and, tentatively, a body composition laboratory in which researchers can measure body density and fat.

“This institute will result in breakthroughs in how we use nutrition to enhance human health,” Zeisel says. “We will be able to tailor recommendations on nutrition to the individual and not just give general guidelines. We can change how nutrition is practiced, and by so doing, change people’s lives.”

For more information on the Nutrition Research Institute, visit www.nri.unc.edu.