JAMES PEACOCK ANNOUNCES HIS RE-FIREMENT
By Herman Greene

On May 7, 2015, a reception was held honoring Professor James L. Peacock of the Anthropology Department of the University of North Carolina of Chapel Hill (UNC) and Member of the Board of CES. He is pictured here at that event in front of a plaque marking one of his many achievements—the establishment of the Fedex Global Education Center at UNC.

No account of Jim’s life is complete without reporting on Florence Peacock, his wife, so we quickly add this picture showing the honor given of naming the atrium at the Global Education center after them,

and also posting this picture of Florence and Jim at the reception as well as this picture of the many in attendance.
I have learned in life that there are many kinds of leaders. Some are boisterous and manifest ego at every turn. Such would be the case with Donald Trump. Others seem to be chiseled out of stone and made as grand from the beginning. I think of Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger and, not to leave out women, Golda Meir and Margaret Thatcher.

I have always been especially intrigued and attracted to those leaders who are quiet and unassuming, the kind you would overlook in a crowd, the kind who seem never to be concerned about themselves. Jim, if he weren’t so tall, would be of this type. One of my early memories of Jim was when I came to his quite remarkable house for a reception and he was walking people from the curb some distance away to his house with an umbrella. I had the honor to be greeted this way by him.

Jim’s leadership always seemed to be by helping others. This is why he has gained such respect.

Though he says he was an average student in high school in rural Georgia and he came to college unprepared, he began to distinguish himself as an undergraduate at Duke University and later as a graduate student at Harvard University where he received his PhD in Anthropology. One of his dramatic stories concerns his fieldwork in Indonesia where he and Florence lived and worked. He lived in the most simple of circumstances and he says on 1,500 calories a day, mostly rice. He worked in Surabaja, Indonesia in the turbulent years of 1962-63. I always think of this very humble period of the lives of Jim and Florence when I see them at elegant events like his May 7th reception.

He began his teaching at Princeton University in 1965 where he helped to form Princeton’s Anthropology. He began his teaching at Chapel Hill in 1967 and now in 2015, after 50 years of teaching he announced his “re-firement,” my word (courtesy of Matthew Fox).

Along the way he wrote a standard textbook, The Anthropological Lens, that has sold more than 25,000 copies, and, along with other books, Grounded Globalism: How the US South Embraces the World. Having a compassionate and understanding view of others and their needs is a central feature of Jim’s life. He led UNC as leader of its University Center for International Studies from 1995 to 2003 and was involved in the establishment of more than 50 international programs as well as what is now UNC Global housed in the 80,000 square foot Fedex Global Education Center. In 1995 he served as President of the American Anthropological Association. He also served as Chair of the UNC Faculty and in many other positions. His awards are too numerous to mention.

His work with the Rotary Peace Fellows Program at UNC and Duke University has deeply impressed me. Each year young people from around the world who wish to promote tolerance and cooperation apply for fellowships to do graduate work at these universities. In the spring of each year, current fellows give reports on their work. I have attended these sessions and the depth of the work and dedication of these young people are simply astounding. Jim is a pillar of the Rotary Peace Fellows program not only at Chapel Hill but internationally.
I have many connections with Jim and Florence, but two stand out. First, my wife Sandi served as Administrator of Carolina Seminars at UNC for 20 years through 2014. Jim was the Director of that program. This is an interdisciplinary faculty seminar program stretching the experience of faculty members at UNC and surrounding universities. Like so many of Jim’s efforts, this program promotes personal growth through personal relationships.

Second, Jim, perhaps through me, began to study Thomas Berry some time ago. He has included *The Great Work* as a text in one of his classes for several years, and he is a very important member of the CES Board. He and Florence have been benefactors of CES as they have for so many other groups and individuals. Jim has a deep understanding of the centrality of the ecological issue.

Jim’s last day with UNC is June 30, 2015. We honor him and Florence as they re-fire. I believe the best for them is yet to be.