

# *James E. McDonald*

Controversial, bizarre and brilliant are but three adjectives which have been used to describe the career of atmospheric physicist Dr. James E. McDonald.

Most of all, however, he was a fighter for his beliefs, whether they were concerned with UFOs, peace in Vietnam or how hard major league batters hit baseballs.

To his colleagues at the University of Arizona, he was a brilliant physicist. His academic accomplishments and research made the Arizona Institute of Atmospheric Physics one of the nation's most respected.

Nationally he drew attention and aroused speculation because of his fights with the military over his belief that unidentified flying objects were neither identifiable nor unexplainable. He frequently charged that the government impeded his research into what he called "extraterrestrial surveillance craft."

And when the controversial supersonic transport plane was being debated in Congress, it was Dr. McDonald who testified to his conviction that a fleet of SSTs would produce enough chemical reactions from exhaust emission to cause cancer in humans.

This was Dr. McDonald's belief and he fought for it as he fought against the ringing of Tucson with Titan missiles a decade ago. On some of his beliefs he was a Don Quixote flailing away at windmills, but no one questioned his sincerity or failed to appreciate his highly scientific skills.

Dr. McDonald took his own life at the age of 51. He was much too young and had too much to offer to have ended his academic contributions and internationally known accomplishments in this manner.