FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Southern Gerontological Society Honors ECU Sociology Professor

GREENVILLE, N.C. (April 11, 2013) — This past Sunday, April 7, the Southern Gerontological Society honored East Carolina University professor of sociology Dr. James “Jim” Mitchell with the distinction of being inducted into the Gerontologists Rooted in the South (GRITS) Hall of Fame for 2013. The announcement took place at the Society’s 34th annual meeting in Charlotte.

The GRITS Hall of Fame seeks to recognize individuals who have made important contributions to the Southern Gerontological Society and to the field of gerontology through research, teaching, administration, advocacy or applied practice. It also seeks to honor those members who serve as role models for future generations interested in the advancement of knowledge and practice in the field of aging.

“Initially, I viewed this induction somewhat light-heartedly,” said Mitchell. “I became a bit more serious about it when I looked at the rather small list of six former inductees. All former honorees, including two mentors and friends who have died, have made significant contributions to the field of gerontology. I was pretty humbled by this designation, which speaks to the independence and the support that I have received from ECU over the years.”

A native of Minnesota, Mitchell joined ECU’s Department of Sociology in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences in 1980. He was director of the Brody School of Medicine’s Center on Aging for 25 years and associate director of the UNC Institute on Aging for 12 years. Currently, Mitchell serves as the director of the ECU Center for Diversity and Inequality Research, housed in the Department of Sociology.

Prior to coming to ECU, Mitchell completed a pre-doctoral fellowship with the Midwest Council for Social Research on Aging. He received his doctoral degree from Oklahoma State University, his graduate degree from the University of Wyoming and his undergraduate degree from Bemidji State University in Minnesota.

Mitchell’s research and writing is based in eastern North Carolina, describing and explaining disparity by race, gender and residence in health outcomes and access to assistive services among community-dwelling older people. Additional research and writings in applied gerontology focus on preventative health behavior among community-dwelling older adults.

Mitchell is an active member of the Southern Gerontological Society and has served on various committees and leadership positions. He was awarded the SGS’s Academic Gerontologist Award in 2000, served as editor of the Journal of Applied Gerontology from 2003–07 and as President of SGS from 2009–10.
Two other colleagues were inducted into the GRITS Hall of Fame on Sunday; Dr. Graham D. Rowles, a well-known cultural geographer who was the founding director of the Graduate Center for Gerontology at the University of Kentucky, and Dr. Constance L. Coogle, a well-known applied researcher who is the associate director for research at the Virginia Center on Aging.

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