

Norman R. Pace - Biographical sketch -

Dr. Norman Pace received an A.B. from Indiana University and the Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. He has held faculty positions at several institutions, including the National Jewish Hospital and Research Center, the University of Colorado Medical Center, Indiana University and the University of California, Berkeley. He currently is Distinguished Professor of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Pace works in two scientific arenas. On one hand he is a molecular biologist, and his laboratory has made substantive contributions to our understanding of nucleic acid structure and processing. Noteworthy recent efforts have involved elucidation of the crystal structure and catalytic mechanism of the RNA moiety of ribonuclease P, an enzyme composed of RNA instead of the usual protein. On the other hand, Pace is a microbial ecologist. His laboratory has led the field in the development and use of molecular tools to study microbial ecosystems. This work has led to the discovery of many novel organisms and an understanding of some unusual symbioses. The results have expanded substantially the known diversity of microbial life in the environment. Current efforts range from high-temperature environments and human disease to the microbiology of the human-occupied indoor environment.

Pace is a member of the National Academy of Sciences; and he is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Academy of Microbiology, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has received a number of awards, for instance the 1996 Procter and Gamble Award in Applied and Environmental Microbiology, the 2007 Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Microbiology, the 2008 Lifetime Achievement in Science Award from the RNA Society, the 2008 Tiedje Lifetime Achievement Award in Environmental Microbiology from the International Society for Microbial Ecology and the 2001 Selman A. Waksman Award for Distinguished Contributions in Microbiology from the National Academy of Sciences. This is the Nation's highest award in microbiology. He also in 2001 was appointed a Fellow of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Pace additionally is an expert in cave exploration. He has led and participated in numerous expeditions in this country and internationally. Pace has been elected a Fellow of the National Speleological Society, the Cave Research Foundation and the Explorers Club. He received the Lewis Bicking Award from the NSS for his contributions to American caving.