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WORLD-RENOWNED ETHNOBOTANIST TO REVEAL EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON PLANTS AND PEOPLE OF THE HIMALAYAS ON THURSDAY, FEB. 7, 2008

FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC; RECEPTION, 6:30 P.M.; LECTURE, 7:00 P.M.,

FORT WORTH, Texas – Ethnobotanist Jan Salick, Ph.D., will descend from the Himalayas to kick off the spring Distinguished Lecturer Series, “Healthy Planet, Healthy People: A Climate for Understanding,” at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008, at Fort Worth Botanic Garden’s Dorothea Leonhardt Lecture Hall at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard (off University Drive) in Fort Worth.

In her talk, “Tibetan Ethnobotany and Climate Change,” Dr. Salick will reveal what she has witnessed while monitoring the effects of climate change on the alpine flora and people of the eastern Himalayas. Ethnobotany is the plant lore of indigenous cultures, and the series (organized by the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) and the University of North Texas Health Science Center) explores the origins and development of certain diseases and the direct relationship between environmental quality and human health.

Admission is free and open to the public; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, call BRIT at 817.332.4441 or Metro 817.429.3200, or visit BRIT’s Web site: www.brit.org.

The co-hosts of this spring’s Distinguished Lecturer Series, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Fort Worth Botanical Society, and Fort Worth Garden Club, will hold a public reception for the speaker at 6:30 p.m. in the lobby of the lecture hall. American Airlines is the travel sponsor of this year’s lecture series.

Salick is working with the Environmental Change Institute, Chinese institutions, and the international GLORIA consortium, which is studying the impact of climate change on alpine areas throughout the world. The first ecosystems on Earth to feel the effects of climate change are arctic and alpine (mountain) areas, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Many medicines come from alpine flora, but collection is becoming more challenging, and droughts and floods are affecting crops, causing a chain reaction of increasing pests and disease. Her research team is monitoring the impact of climate change on the Tibetan culture in terms of the decrease in flora and thus available medicine and food.

Curator of ethnobotany for the Missouri Botanical Garden, Salick is a professor at Washington University, University of Missouri St. Louis, and St. Louis University. She was a senior ethno-ecology

fellow at Linacre College, University of Oxford. She earned her Ph.D. at Cornell University, her Master of Science degree at Duke University, and her B.A. at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Upcoming Lecture

The final speaker for this spring's lecture series is Robert Finkelman, Ph.D., research professor at The University of Texas at Dallas. His talk, "From Water to Dust: Medical Wonders from the Earth," will begin at 7:00 p.m., on Thursday, March 6, 2008.

About BRIT

Founded in 1991 and open to the public, BRIT is a nonprofit international botanical resource center serving researchers in the fields of medicine, agriculture, and conservation. Its primary facility is in downtown Fort Worth in a restored historical warehouse at the corner of 4th and Pecan Streets.

Through extensive research, preservation, and conservation of plant life, BRIT strives to bring public understanding of the value that plants bring to our lives. BRIT's herbarium, a collection of approximately one million dried plant specimens representing most of the earth's plant families, is one of the largest in the United States and the largest independent herbarium in the Southwest; it includes one of the world's best collections of Texas plant specimens. BRIT's library houses more than 75,000 volumes of botanical books, periodicals, and journals from more than 90 countries.

BRIT's plant research programs help to preserve those forests and allow us to understand the impact that mankind has on rainforests through mining and other destructive operations. BRIT has conducted extensive research in tropical rainforests in the Philippines, Costa Rica, and currently in Peru and Papua New Guinea. BRIT also closely studies the flora/fauna connection inside the rainforests to track the migration of plant species as well as identifying new ones.

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About the UNTHSC

The University of North Texas Health Science Center (www.hsc.unt.edu) is a graduate school involved in education, research, patient care, and community service. Located in Fort Worth's Cultural District, the 33-acre campus includes the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, Physician Assistant Studies Department, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Public Health, and School of Health Professions.

UNTHSC leads all Texas health science centers in research funding and has one of the three FBI-qualified DNA crime labs in the United States. TCOM has been in the top 50 U.S. medical schools

for the past six years. UNTHSC has a faculty of 290, a staff of 1,200, 1,065 students, and 3,800 graduates to date. UNT Health is the largest multispecialty clinical practice plan in Tarrant County; its 160 physicians in 31 health clinics served approximately 385,000 patients in 2006.

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