“From Giant Lemurs to Little Hobbits: Islands in the Stream of Evolution and Extinction”

Abstract:  
The isolation afforded by islands has contributed to the evolution of unique species of plants and animals. This talk will focus on personal research experiences and insights gained from paleontological investigations of primate and human evolution in Madagascar and the archipelago of Indonesia. “Giant” lemurs once populated virtually all of Madagascar and converged in design on monkeys, koalas and sloths. Lost in space and time, the tiny “hobbits” (*Homo floresiensis*) of Flores Island reveal a new and surprising chapter in human evolution. Origins and adaptations of these insular species are discussed, and the recent extinctions of both giant lemurs and hobbits will be considered in light of modern human arrival on these islands.

Bio:  
William Jungers obtained his B.A. from Oberlin College in 1970 and his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1976. He joined the faculty of Stony Brook University in 1978, and is currently a Distinguished Teaching Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anatomical Sciences in the School of Medicine. He has worked for many years on primate evolution and extinction in Madagascar. His longstanding interests in body size and skeletal design in human evolution now focus on the enigmatic hobbits (*Homo floresiensis*) from Flores, Indonesia.