

# UA Physicist Found Dead In Desert

James E. McDonald, 51, a scientific voice in the wilderness on controversial issues ranging from UFO to SST, was found dead in a desert area north of Tucson yesterday.

McDonald, of 3461 E. 3rd St., was a senior physicist specializing in clouds at the University of Arizona's Institute of Atmospheric Physics.

His death was apparently a suicide, according to sheriff's deputies. An autopsy was performed, but no report was immediately available.

Sheriff Waldon V. Burr said a note and a .38 revolver were found beside the body. There was a bullet wound in the head.

Frank Flores, of 127 E. Lee St., told investigators that he and his children were hiking about noon yesterday when they found the body at Canyon del Oro near Ina Road on Interstate 10.

McDonald reportedly took a cab from a downtown motel to the area near where his body was found.

McDonald was blinded when he shot himself in the head on April 9, according to police reports, but only last week he began going to his office several hours a day.

McDonald came to the UA in 1954 after serving as a research physicist at the University of Chicago. His doctorate was from Iowa State.

UA President Richard A. Harvill said that McDonald was an "exceptionally able teacher" and "well-known throughout the United States as a brilliant scholar."

Louis J. Baffan, associate director of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, said that during the past 10 years McDonald made many important contributions to the advancement of cloud physics and weather modification research.

A member of the National Academy of Sciences, McDonald



James E. McDonald

jumped into the national spotlight with his stand on unidentified flying objects (UFOs).

McDonald was bluntly outspoken in his opposition to the Air Force's so-called "Condon Report," in which most UFO sightings were linked to satellites, balloons, clouds, birds and other explainable objects. The report was named for Dr. Edward U. Condon, who conducted the study for the Air Force.

After the Condon Report was issued in 1969, McDonald embarked on a speaking crusade against it.

He said the Condon Report was not a high-caliber scientific study.

McDonald's criticism of the report and the Air Force explanations of the UFOs was based on several years' study in which he concluded that UFOs were real — and probably extraterrestrial — surveillance craft.

Nor did McDonald confine his dissent to UFOs.

He was active most recently against the SST, branding the project "socially insane." He suggested that chemical reactions to exhausts from a fleet of SSTs could cause 10,000 new cases of skin cancer a year.

In the early 1960s, McDonald accused the Air Force of making mistakes in the location of Titan intercontinental missile sites around Tucson.

McDonald and the committee he formed among Tucsonians reasoned that the missile sites would become prime targets, and prevailing winds from west to east could expose thousands to nuclear fallout.

The group suggested that the Titan sites all be placed to the east of Tucson.

Like so many of McDonald's battles, he lost. The Air Force stuck to its original plan and Tucson was ringed with 18 Titan missile sites.

Happily, in the decade since, McDonald's theory on nuclear fallout has never been tested.

## Quake Danger At Dams Seen

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says dams should not be built near active earth faults because the weight of water behind the dam can increase earthquake danger.

The report said a study of more than 10,000 earthquakes which have occurred at Hoover Dam made it clear they were related to the water's weight because no quakes were reported there for 15 years before the dam was built.