Mindel Sheps Award, *PAA New Orleans, 18 April 2008, J.W. Vaupel*

Thank you. I am deeply honored by the Mindel Sheps Award and profoundly grateful to my P.A.A. friends and colleagues. The Award has previously been given to:

- Samuel Preston
- Robert Schoen
- Robert Willis
- Robert Pollak
- Leslie Kish
- Shripad Tuljapurkar
- Burton Singer
- Joel Cohen
- Kenneth Manton
- Kenneth Wachter
- John Bongaarts
- Ronald Lee
- Jane Menken
- Robert Potter
- William Brass
- Nathan Keyfitz and
- Ansley Coale.

This is a distinguished list of outstanding demographers and most of you know most of them.

Demography is an inclusive, outward-looking discipline. Demographers can productively collaborate with sociologists, economists, historians and other social scientists. Demographers can also productively collaborate with epidemiologists, geneticists, ecologists, and evolutionary biologists. The public is interested in demographic facts and findings and demographers speak truth to power at the airy, windy heights of public policy.

Our capability to interact with social scientists, with medical researchers, with evolutionary biologists and with public policymakers stems in large part from the unparalleled data demographers are blessed with. Our ability to make use of these data rests on our mathematical concepts and methods. Mathematical demography is the source of our strength as a discipline. It enables us to develop insightful models and powerful methods. It enables us to prove theorems that are true not just today but forever.

At the heart of mathematical demography is formal demography, the study of how measures of demographic structure and dynamics influence other measures. How does saving lives influence death rates? How does postponement of childbearing alter the number of babies? What is the impact on population dynamics of changes in the composition of a population? Advances in formal

demography in recent years have led to deep new understanding of such fundamental questions.

Formal demography is pure demography, the study of how demography affects demography. Formal demography is the quintessence of demography, the champagne of demography, the poetry of demography. It is the wellspring of the spirit of demography. Formal demography is what holds the centripetal field of demography together. Formal demography is why we are a discipline and not just a bunch of things.

The Mindel Sheps Award is a reminder, every other year, of how fundamentally important mathematical demography in general and formal demography in particular are to the discipline of demography, a reminder that we as a profession should be doing even more to foster the kind of research honored by the Sheps Award and exemplified by the work of Mindel Sheps. The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research will host a reception after the Presidential Address in the Lagniappe room ---- for friends of mathematical demography.

Thank you.