Last week, President Obama named NCAR's very own Warren Washington as one of ten eminent researchers to be awarded the National Medal of Science. The recipients of the science medal will receive their awards - the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on scientists, engineers, and inventors - at a White House ceremony later this year. Since the first award was given in 1963, there have been just 450 other recipients.

"The extraordinary accomplishments of these scientists, engineers, and inventors are a testament to American industry and ingenuity," President Obama said. "Their achievements have redrawn the frontiers of human knowledge while enhancing American prosperity, and it is my tremendous pleasure to honor them for their important contributions."

Of his many many honors and awards, Warren received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Raymond L. Orbach of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in August 2007. In honoring him, then head of DOE, Raymond Orbach, said: "In recognition of a lifetime of extraordinary contributions to National and International science, on behalf of the U. S. Department of Energy, I wish to express our appreciation. You [Warren] have advised five Presidents, given wise and insightful counsel to colleagues, advice to the Department of Energy and other Federal agencies, and mentored directly and as a role model to enumerable young people. Your numerous scientific contributions to climate modeling have provided new knowledge on how the Earth's climate may respond to human and natural system changes. I commend and thank you for your service to science and to humankind."

Congrats Warren!!!
Pachauri Staying on as IPCC Chairman for Fifth Assessment Report

Despite recent calls for Rajendra Pachauri, the longtime chairman of the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), to step down, Dr. Pachauri indicated last week that he plans to stay on board with the Panel through a second term, seeing through the completion of the Fifth Assessment Report due out in 2014. Dr. Pachauri said a one-term limit, if adopted, would apply only to future IPCC leaders when he steps down in 2014.

Dr. Pachauri, an engineer, has led the IPCC since 2002 and was re-elected in 2008 to a second six-year term. Following revelations of several errors in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, including a unfounded claim that Himalayan glaciers would melt by 2035, Dr. Pachauri's leadership came under question.

In response, Dr. Pachauri last spring called for a thorough review of the IPCC, and the InterAcademy Council was selected to conduct the review. The Council's final report, released in August, called for fundamental reform of the processes and proceedings of the IPCC. Specifically, the report recommended that the IPCC chairman serve only one six-year term, rather than the current maximum of two. Some observers believed this amounted to a call on Dr. Pachauri to step down and hand the gavel to a new chairman, and some in the scientific community suggested publicly that it was time for Dr. Pachauri to step down.

But at a meeting of the IPCC in Busan, South Korea, last week, Dr. Pachauri vowed that he will stick around for the Fifth Assessment Report: "I have every intention of staying right till I've completed the mission that I've accepted to carry out—namely, the completion of the Fifth Assessment Report in 2014," he said.

At the Busan, South Korea meeting, the IPCC made progress on some of the recommendations of the InterAcademy Council report. The Panel agreed to tighten fact-checking in reports and set up a taskforce to decide on wider reforms by mid-2011.

Yale Report: More Than Half of Americans Would Fail Climate Knowledge Test

A new report from the Yale School of Forestry and Environment Studies Project on Climate Change Communication finds important gaps in knowledge and common misconceptions about climate change and the Earth system among the American public. The study asked Americans what they understand about how the climate system works, and the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to global warming.

Only 8 percent had knowledge equivalent to an A or B, 40 percent would receive a C or D, and 52 percent would get an F. For example, only:

- 57 percent know that the greenhouse effect refers to gases in the atmosphere that trap heat;
• 50 percent of Americans understand that global warming is caused mostly by human activities;

• 45 percent understand that carbon dioxide traps heat from the Earth’s surface; and

• 25 percent have ever heard of coral bleaching or ocean acidification.

Meanwhile, large majorities think that the hole in the ozone layer and aerosol spray cans contribute to global warming, leading many to incorrectly conclude that banning aerosol spray cans or stopping rockets from punching holes in the ozone layer are viable solutions.

On the brighter side, the study also finds that Americans trust scientists and scientific organizations far more than any other source of information about global warming.

**White House Delivers Preliminary Plan for National Earth Observations**

On Sept. 10, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) delivered a key report to Congress outlining a strategic approach to enhancing the nation's capacity to observe the Earth and its interconnected atmospheric, geologic, and environmental systems. The report, [Achieving and Sustaining Earth Observations: A Preliminary Plan Based on a Strategic Assessment](http://www.whitehouse.gov) by the U.S. Group on Earth Observations, was requested by Congress in the 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 111-117). According the an OSTP news release, "It illustrates how the President’s FY 2011 budget enables a reversal of the decline of the nation’s Earth observation infrastructure—an infrastructure that is critical to protecting life, property, natural resources and ecosystems, and national security."

The report provides updates and offers recommendations for space-based and *in situ* measurements in seventeen categories.