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News Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Release 40-05
October 31, 2005

Statement by David Rejeski, Director
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Tribute to Nanotechnology Pioneer & Nobel Laureate Richard Smalley
(June 6, 1943 – October 28, 2005)

WASHINGTON – Nobel Laureate Richard Smalley was a giant in the realm of nanotechnology and of discovery. Just as important, he was passionate about applying his scientific breakthroughs to helping people.

One of Smalley's greatest hopes was that nanotechnology would give the world cheap, abundant and sustainable solar energy. Another dream was that nanotechnology would help advance treatment for cancers like the non-Hodgkin's lymphoma he died from.

The world is a sadder place because Richard Smalley—who died a few days ago (October 28, 2005) and who shared the 1996 Nobel Prize in chemistry for the co-discovery of a soccer ball-shaped form of carbon called buckminsterfullerene, or buckyballs—is no longer with us. The highest tribute we can pay to Smalley's memory is to help ensure that his hopes for using nanotechnologies to enable a more sustainable future become a reality.

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David Rejeski is director of The Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The Project was created in partnership with The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Nanotechnology is being heralded by some as the next industrial revolution. Nanotechnologies promise great societal and economic benefits. However, the scale and uniqueness of these technologies—a human hair is roughly 100,000 nanometers (nm) wide, and nanomaterials are generally engineered at a scale of 1 to 100 nm—may lead to new health, safety and environmental risks. Understanding and addressing these risks, especially in the workplace, will be integral to the long-term success of nanotechnologies.

For more information about the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies or The Woodrow Wilson Center, see: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/foresight> or <http://www.wilsoncenter.org>.

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The Pew Charitable Trusts is a national charitable organization serving the public interest by providing information, advancing policy solutions and supporting civic life. The Trusts will invest \$204 million in fiscal year 2006 to provide organizations and citizens with fact-based research and practical solutions for challenging issues.