J.R. McNeill studied at Swarthmore College and Duke University, where he completed a Ph.D. in 1981. Since 1985 he has taught at Georgetown University, in the History Department and School of Foreign Service, where he held the Cinco Hermanos Chair in Environmental and International Affairs before becoming University Professor in 2006. He has held two Fulbright awards, a Guggenheim fellowship, a MacArthur grant, a fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center, and a visiting appointment at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. His books are The Atlantic Empires of France and Spain, 1700-1765 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); The Mountains of the Mediterranean World (New York: Cambridge University Press); Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth-century World (New York: Norton, 2000), co-winner of the World History Association book prize, the Forest History Society book prize, and runner-up for the BP Natural World book prize, listed by the London Times among the best science books every written (despite being a history book and not a science book) and translated into 9 languages; The Human Web: A Bird's-eye View of World History (New York: Norton, 2003), co-authored with his father William McNeill and translated into 7 languages; and most recently, Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), which won the Beveridge Prize from the American Historical Association, a PROSE award from the Association of American Publishers, and was listed by the Wall Street Journal among the best books in early American history. He has edited or co-edited eight more books. In 2010 he was awarded the Toynbee Prize for 'academic and public contributions to humanity.' In 2012-15 he served as a Vice-President of the American Historical Association and in 2011-13 as President of the American Society for Environmental History.