

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2002

Contact: Dawn Kappel
Director of External Communications
(312) 322-0524

Diana Holic
Public Relations Coordinator
(312) 322-0548

**THE ADLER PLANETARIUM & ASTRONOMY MUSEUM
ADDS STELLAR NEW COMPONENTS TO ITS MILKY WAY
GALAXY GALLERY**

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum has enhanced the largest gallery in its Sky Pavilion, Ameritech's Milky Way Galaxy Gallery. Spectacular new components have been added and exhibits that were installed in 1999 when the Pavilion opened have been updated. These fascinating new additions are designed to heighten the visitor experience and provide a rich and in-depth introduction to the wonders of our home galaxy.

Visitors enter the gallery and encounter, **An Insider's View**, an interactive 24-foot X 4-foot backlit transparency of a photo of the entire "Milky Way." The exciting image, which provides stunning details of the galaxy, was produced by taking a panorama of photos from different locations on the Earth and assembling them in such a way as to cover the complete band of Milky Way. Prepared from eight frames taken with a large-format camera, the images were obtained from Mt. Locke, in Fort Davis, Texas, and Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia. Sensors on a rail in front of the photo are used to activate monitors so that visitors may take a "deeper look" at selected celestial objects in this photo. Video clips zoom in on the objects at a very high resolution, culminating in the Hubble Space Telescope's images of the objects being viewed. **An Outsider's View** helps visitors to envision what our galaxy would look like if we could travel outside it. Visitors also discover how computer models are used to

- more -

Milky Way/Add 1

explore the formation of beautiful galactic spiral arms, and by using the nearby "Astroflow" kiosk, visitors can create their own models of the dynamic processes that accompany the birth and death of stars.

The centerpiece of the gallery is a striking 21-foot tall light sculpture; an interwoven material and fiber optic display that artistically represents the multitude of stars that one could see in the sky from a very dark location away from city lights. This sculpture illustrates only a small fraction of the actual number of stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. It is estimated that about **one trillion** stars make up the Milky Way and we see only a few ten-millionths of a percent of them. This exhibit helps visitors make sense of the large numbers that are often used in space science, answering, by giving examples, questions such as “**How many is one million? One billion? One trillion?**”

The **More Than Meets the Eye** exhibit invites visitors to use an infrared camera to investigate how infrared light illuminates stars and objects that cannot be seen in visible light. The exhibit also includes a monitor that allows visitors to see themselves in infrared light. A second monitor presents an instructional video on infrared astronomy, produced by Space Telescope Infrared Facility (SIRTF) staff at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and a video produced for United Airlines and tailored specifically for the Adler by Toast Productions on the Stratospheric Observatory For Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA), This exhibit will open in a few weeks.

The large dome at the south end of the gallery is devoted to **Our Star - the Sun**. Visitors learn how the Sun compares to other stars. They follow the path of energy through the Sun, exploring the physics of nuclear fusion, radiation, and convection through a series of hands-on activities. Visitors can even listen to “sounds” of the Sun in **The Seismic Sun** and learn about the new science of “helioseismology.” The interior of the dome has a multi-media display of the Sun and images of the Sun in both visible and invisible light, highlighting what scientists learn from these observations. Weather permitting, visitors can view a live transmission of the Sun from Adler’s own Doane Observatory.

Two other additions to the gallery explore how dim planets orbiting distant stars can be detected indirectly, from their effects on the stars they orbit and how the motions of stars near the center of our galaxy reveal the existence of a giant black hole.

- more -

Milky Way /Add 2

These engaging and exciting exhibits join a variety of other gallery components such as the **3-D Theater, The Real Life of Stars** and **What is a Black Hole?** that aid visitors in understanding that our galaxy is a dynamic swirling disk of stars, gas and dust in embedded in a sphere of mysterious dark matter.

NEW IN 2002
Under One Sky

A stunning new gallery *Bringing the Heavens to Earth* and an exciting new sky show *Skywatchers of Africa* launches *Under One Sky*, a year-long theme that celebrates the influence of astronomy in cultures around the world over thousands of years. Family and educational programs along with special activities for Adler visitors will explore diversity through the exploration of how past and current cultures have looked to the heavens for answers and guidance.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum hours:

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

On the first Friday of each month the Adler offers special programs with extended hours from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Regular Admission:

Ultimate Universe Adventure is \$16.00 for adults, \$15.00 for seniors 65 and older and \$14.00 for children 4 – 17.

This package includes admission and the choice of two sky shows.

Galaxy Passport is \$13.00 for adults, \$12.00 for seniors 65 and older and \$11.00 for children 4 – 17. This package includes admission and choice of sky shows. Each additional sky show is \$5.00.

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum is the first planetarium in the Western Hemisphere. Its astronomy programs have reached over 35 million people during the past 72 years. Nine state-of-the-art exhibition galleries located in the stunning new Sky Pavilion and the recently renovated landmark 1930s building present modern space exploration along with the history of astronomy. The world's first StarRider™ Theater, the most technologically advanced, audience-interactive planetarium, fuels the imagination of visitors during virtual flights through

- more -

Milky Way/Add 3

the cosmos. With a staff of over 200, the Adler pursues its mission to present the human quest to better understand the universe. Adler scientists and historians, who hold joint appointments at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, are working at the forefront of research in astronomy and its fascinating history. The Adler is leading the way into the new “Space Millennium.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (312) 922-STAR

TTY: (312) 322-0995

www.adlerplanetarium.org

###