

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 16, 2003

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**TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE TO OCCUR
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2003
BEGINNING AT 9:03 P.M. (CDT)**

Adler Planetarium to provide unique opportunities to view phenomenon

2003 provides sky watchers not one, but two, opportunities to observe total lunar eclipses visible from the Chicago metro area – the first on the night of May 15th, and the second in the early evening of November 8th. The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum will present a unique lunar eclipse experience on Thursday, May 15, 2003. The Adler will offer a variety of activities including: telescopes available for viewing the lunar eclipse as it slowly progresses through its stages, special lectures reenacting the eclipse and explaining the details of this intriguing natural wonder presented in the Sky Theater and, throughout the eclipse, Adler astronomers, educators and volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions. The Adler event begins at 9:00 p.m. and continues until Midnight.

A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Full Moon passes into the shadow of the Earth. There is absolutely no danger when looking at a lunar eclipse with the naked eye or when looking at it through a telescope or binoculars, since an eclipse of the Moon only appears sometime after sunset – when the Sun is below the horizon. Viewers are free to enjoy the potential brilliant colors of the Moon during the eclipse without taking any special precautions. Although you would expect the Moon to disappear completely when it enters the dark shadow of the Earth, the atmosphere bends some sunlight around the

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Lunar Eclipse/Add 1

edge of the Earth so the Moon seems to change color as it moves into the shadow. The color of each total lunar eclipse depends on how much dust and pollution our atmosphere contains at that time, so the eclipsed Moon may appear dark brown, deep red, or bright orange. In December 1992, volcanic dust from the Mount Pinatubo eruption made the Moon completely disappear during the total lunar eclipse.

WHEN AND WHERE TO LOOK IN MAY

The May 15th eclipse will become visible to the naked eye when the Moon enters the umbral phase and is low in the southeast at 9:03 p.m. CDT, about an hour after moonrise. The total eclipse begins at 10:14 p.m. and lasts until 11:06 p.m. The moon finally emerges from the dark portion of the Earth's shadow at 12:17 a.m. on May 16th.

EVENT DETAILS

Adler Lunar Eclipse Viewing

Thursday, May 15, 2003

9:00 p.m. until Midnight

Rain or shine

There is a \$5 per person fee for each Sky Theater presentation; all other events are free of charge. All events free of charge to Adler members. For more information, contact 312-922-STAR (7827) or www.adlerplanetarium.org.

Adler astronomers will be available for interviews before and during the eclipse.

Please call 312-322-0524 to arrange interviews. The attached Eclipse Phases document may be reproduced.

GENERAL INFORMATION

HOURS

Monday-Friday	9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sat-Sun	9:00 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.

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Lunar Eclipse/Add 2

Summer Hours

June 1 through September 1, 2003

Saturday - Wednesday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Thursday - Friday 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

REGULAR ADMISSION:

Ultimate Universe Adventure is \$18.00 for adults, \$17.00 for seniors 65 and older and \$16.00 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 one sky show.

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum was founded in 1930 as the first planetarium in the Western Hemisphere. Its astronomy programs have reached over 40 million people during the past 73 years. Ten state-of-the-art exhibition galleries located in the glass-enclosed Sky Pavilion and the renovated landmark 1930s building present modern space exploration along with the history of astronomy. The StarRiderTheater featuring Digistar 3 is the most technologically advanced, audience-interactive planetarium, fueling the imagination of visitors during virtual flights through the cosmos. With a dedicated and professional staff, 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 partially supported by a CityArts Program 4 grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Adler gratefully acknowledges the generous support it receives from the Chicago Park District on behalf of the citizens of Chicago.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (312) 922-STAR

TTY: (312) 322-0995

www.adlerplanetarium.org.

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