



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 18, 2004

Media Contact: Molly O'Connell
Director of Museum Communications
Phone: 312.322.0524
Fax: 312.322.9117
moconnell@adlernet.org

**ADLER HOSTS FREE PUBLIC OBSERVING EVENT TO WATCH
THE LAST TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE UNTIL 2007**

Eclipse begins October 27, 2004 at 8:14 p.m. (CDT)

CHICAGO, IL – On Wednesday, October 27, the Adler Planetarium will host an observing event from 8 p.m. until midnight to view the last total lunar eclipse until 2007. The Moon will begin its eclipse phase at 8:14 p.m. (CDT).

To celebrate this exciting astronomical event, the Adler will provide free telescope viewing to the public as the Moon moves through different stages. Adler astronomers, educators and volunteers, as well as members of the Chicago Astronomical Society, will be on hand to answer questions during the course of the evening. Visitors can also watch, "Moon Madness," a live eclipse explanation and re-enactment Sky Show in the Adler's historic Sky Theater. The show, which will run continuously through the evening, is \$5 per person and free for Adler members. All outdoor programming is free to the public.

A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Earth, Moon, and Sun are aligned in such a way that the Moon passes through the Earth's shadow. Because it moves through its stages slowly over several hours, a lunar eclipse is one of the of the easiest sky phenomena to observe. Unlike a solar eclipse, there is no danger in viewing a lunar eclipse with the naked eye, through a telescope, or with binoculars.

When viewing a lunar eclipse, be sure to watch for the potential brilliant colors of the Moon as the eclipse progresses. The color of each total lunar eclipse depends on how much dust Earth's atmosphere contains at the time. This dust can make the eclipsed Moon appear dark brown, deep red, or bright orange. During the December 1992 total lunar eclipse, volcanic dust from the Mount Pinatubo eruption made the Moon disappear completely.

"Because the Moon will not pass through the center of the Earth's shadow, it will likely be brighter and more colorful than in recent years," said Larry Ciupik, Adler Astronomer. "The Moon will be so bright during this eclipse that it would still be visible on a partly cloudy night."

(more)

ADLER TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE EVENT – Page Two

The eclipse on October 27 will begin at 8:14 p.m. (CDT), at which point the shadow of the Earth on the Moon will be obvious to the naked eye. Totality will begin at 9:23 p.m. (CDT), lasting until 10:45 p.m. (CDT). At that point, the Moon will begin to move out of the Earth's dark shadow, emerging completely at 11:54 p.m. (CDT).

NOTE: A graphic diagram detailing the total lunar eclipse is available by email upon request.

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum opened in 1930 as the Western Hemisphere's first planetarium and has been at the forefront of innovation ever since. Celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2005, the Adler promotes leading edge research in astronomy and its fascinating history. In addition to one of the world's most important antique instrument collections, the Adler is the only museum in the world with two planetarium theaters, including the world's first StarRider Theater, the most technologically advanced digital planetarium. The Adler Planetarium is located at 1300 South Lake Shore Drive in Chicago and is open every day except for Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. For more information, call 312.922.STAR, or visit our website at www.adlerplanetarium.org

The Adler Planetarium and the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum have announced an 18-month partnership called *Under One Sky* (Bajo Un Mismo Cielo). Among the first such collaborations in the nation, *Under One Sky* will expand educational opportunities in Chicago and offer reciprocal member benefits at both museums. From now until December 31, 2005, the two institutions will explore a rich heritage of cultural astronomy in Mexico.

###