

ADLER) 75

AMERICA'S FIRST PLANETARIUM

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AMERICA'S FIRST PLANETARIUM TURNS 75! Local Middle School Students to Launch Rocket to Open Adler on May 12

CHICAGO – On May 12, the future generation of space explorers will launch the **Adler Planetarium** into its next 75 years. At **9:30 a.m.**, students from **St. Andrews National Rocket Team** in Park Ridge, IL join **Adler President Dr. Paul H. Knappenberger, Jr.**, to launch a three-foot replica of their National Finals rocket built specifically for this occasion to celebrate the Adler's 75th anniversary.

In the 75 years that the Adler has been serving the City of Chicago and providing science education to generations of visitors, advancements in astronomy have far exceeded anything founder Max Adler and scientists in 1930 could have ever imagined.

Anniversary Sky Show Opens Today

To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Adler Planetarium presents ***Race to the Edge of the Universe***. In 1930, when the Adler opened its doors to the public, little was known about the Universe. Since that time, our knowledge has expanded with great velocity – unimaginable by early space pioneers. The Adler's 75th Anniversary sky show traces this tremendous story and offers a peek at the amazing discoveries that are on the horizon. Visitors attending the 75th anniversary will be the first to see this phenomenal show in the original, historic Sky Theater – the first planetarium theater in America.

75th Anniversary Kick-off Events

Visitors on May 12 can evoke the experience of attending the Adler's original Opening Day - May 12, 1930 - with the 1930's general admission price of 25 cents. Special anniversary events will take place all day long, including fun family activities such as solar viewing (weather permitting) and "Create A Comet." Cake sculptor Mark Seaman will be on hand to create out-of-this-world artistic confections. Free birthday cake will be given to visitors while quantities last.

"75 years ago, Max Adler unveiled the Western Hemisphere's first planetarium. Today there are more than 2,000 worldwide. The Adler Planetarium is thrilled to commemorate this important day in Chicago's cultural history and looks forward to many more years of scientific and educational innovation," said Adler President Paul H. Knappenberger Jr., PhD. "We're especially pleased to welcome this next generation of explorers and help celebrate their achievements, creativity and ingenuity in the area of space science."

The Adler launches their 75th anniversary on the morning of May 12 with a big bang. The four members of the St. Andrews National Rocket Team from Park Ridge: Kenneth Johnson, 14; Michael Cinquino, 14; A.J. Witzke, 13, and Michael Williamson, 13, and Team Leader Len Johnson, 45, will join Adler President Dr. Knappenberger and museum visitors for the countdown and launch that will take place on the Adler's south lawn after the morning's re-dedication.

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Note: The St. Andrews National Rocket Team will travel to Manasses, Virginia, on May 21st to compete in the Team America Rocketry Challenge sponsored by the National Association of Rocketry in partnership with NASA, the American Association of Physics Teachers and 34 AIA member companies.

Park Ridge also has a unique Adler connection. Alfonso Ianelli, the artist who created the bronze relief zodiac sculptures adorning each of the 12 sides of the Adler, as well as the original 1930 dedication plaque in the Rainbow Lobby, had an artist's studio in Park Ridge. Special note: The 1930 dedication plaque features only 8 planets because at the time of the commission, Pluto had not yet been discovered.

Specialized anniversary tours created just for this day will be led by Adler astronomers, educators and historians. Tours, to depart on the hour, will include the Adler's Doane Observatory, the prized historical instrument collection, as well as a unique architectural and special history tour.

Adler astronomers and educators will also offer special updates on the latest happenings in space including the Hubble Space Telescope's recent images of the Whirlpool Galaxy and Eagle Nebula, the Mars Rovers' activities and discussion on the "red speck" planet identified earlier this month – the first planet ever directly observed outside the solar system.

May the Force Be With You!

Anniversary visitors that day are also eligible to win a pair of tickets to the benefit premiere party and screening of "Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith." The premiere party will be held at the Adler Planetarium on May 12, and all museum visitors are eligible for the drawing to be held at the Adler that afternoon. (Winners need not be present). All proceeds of the evening will benefit Children's Memorial Hospital.

The Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum – America's First Planetarium – was founded in 1930 by Chicago business leader Max Adler. Celebrating its 75th Anniversary in 2005, the Adler promotes cutting-edge research in astronomy and its fascinating history. The museum is home to one of the world's most important antique instrument collections and is the only museum in the world with two full-size planetarium theaters, including the world's first StarRider Theater. The Adler is also a recognized leader in science education, with a focus on inspiring young people, particularly women and minorities, to pursue careers in science.

On May 12, 2005, the Adler Planetarium and Astronomy Museum will mark its 75th Anniversary by launching a year of celebration and a new direction for the future. A new mission will expand the museum's current focus on astronomy to celebrate human space exploration and America's space heroes. Through this new vision, the Adler will help inspire the next generation of explorers.

The Adler Planetarium is located at 1300 South Lake Shore Drive in Chicago and is open every day except for Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. For more information, call 312.922.STAR, or visit our website at www.adlerplanetarium.org

Unique historical Adler Planetarium photos available upon request.

For interviews and more information, please contact Molly O'Connell or Amy McGee.

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