

The Adler Planetarium Announces New Sky Show Featuring Evidence of a Real Ninth Planet Opening May 28th

CHICAGO – January 20, 2016 – The Adler Planetarium is excited to announce the release of their newest sky show set to open on May 28th. *Planet Nine* will explore the largest of Pluto's neighbors in the Kuiper belt and invites visitors to join in the hunt for a new ninth planet.

The observable Universe is more than 90 billion light-years across, and most of it is empty space. For centuries, astronomers have used math and physics to light the way. Decades before Clyde Tombaugh first observed Pluto, astronomers Percival Lowell and William Henry Pickering had predicted the existence of a mysterious Planet X in the same celestial neighborhood.

While Pluto's planetary status has been hotly debated among the general public since the International Astronomical Union demoted (or "reclassified") it as a dwarf planet in 2006, scientists have been exploring the rich class of worlds to which Pluto now belongs: the objects of the Kuiper belt. Their work has led them to consider a surprising possibility: that a true ninth planet, far beyond the orbit of Neptune, has been out there all along.

"We are excited to be releasing our newest sky show, especially in light of news on a potential ninth planet lurking in our solar system," says Mark SubbaRao, Ph.D., astronomer and Director of the Space Visualization Laboratory at the Adler Planetarium. "After Mike Brown's Kavli Prize Laureate lecture at the Adler last spring, we decided to collaborate on a sky show. Already in production for months, we were able to get ahead of the curve and give our visitors a glimpse into the very latest science, including the evidence as to why we think another large planet is out there."

Explore these dwarf planets with Mike Brown and his Caltech team in the Adler's new sky show!

Eris

The discovery of Eris prompted the International Astronomical Union to agree on an official definition of "planet" in 2006. Eris is almost exactly the same size as Pluto, yet it weighs 25 percent more. It is also remarkably bright, reflecting 97 percent of the light it receives from the Sun. To put that in perspective, the moon reflects just 12 percent of the Sun's rays.

Haumea

Shaped like a football, Haumea rotates incredibly fast—once every four hours! This object's fast rotation causes its unusual shape. Were it rotating more slowly, gravity would pull it into a sphere, which is why it qualifies as a dwarf planet even though it isn't round.

Sedna

Sedna's orbit takes it deep into the far reaches of the Solar System, almost 20 times as far as Pluto ever goes. A year on Sedna is 11,400 times as long as a year on Earth! But perhaps the most interesting thing about Sedna is the hints it gives us that there are many more objects yet to be found at the edges of our cosmic backyard.

Recognition

The Adler Planetarium gratefully acknowledges The Kavli Foundation for its generous support for the creation of *Planet Nine*.

About the Adler Planetarium

The Adler Planetarium—America's First Planetarium—is more than a museum; it is a laboratory, a classroom, and a community exploring the Universe together. Each year, nearly 500,000 visitors experience the museum's interactive exhibitions, live planetarium shows, hands-on, minds-on STEM education programs, and world-class collections. Founded in 1930 by Chicago business leader Max Adler, the Adler Planetarium is a recognized leader in public engagement. The museum's scientists, historians, and educators inspire the next generation of explorers and invite you to explore space with us.