

ADLER PLANETARIUM

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ADLER'S WOMEN'S BOARD PRESENTS WOMEN IN SPACE SCIENCE AWARD TO NASA ASTRONAUT JOAN HIGGINBOTHAM *Chicago Native and Chicago Public School Alumna Honored*

CHICAGO (March 7, 2007) – The **Women's Board of the Adler Planetarium** will present its **2007 Women in Space Science Award on May 23 to NASA astronaut Joan Higginbotham**, a Chicago native and Chicago Public School (CPS) alumna. The third African-American woman in space, Higginbotham is being honored for her accomplished career in science and her inspiring determination to achieve her dream of becoming an astronaut.

"The Adler Planetarium is committed to telling the human stories behind the science of space exploration, and Higginbotham is a great example of the success one can achieve with determination and hard work," said Pam Paziotopoulos Jann, Women In Space Science Award Celebration Chair. "The Women's Board is dedicated to supporting educational initiatives in Chicago's public schools and we are proud to present this year's Women in Space Science Award to such an extraordinary Chicago native and Chicago Public Schools alumna."

Higginbotham, a 1982 graduate of Chicago's Whitney M. Young Magnet High School, is a mission specialist on the International Space Station. She made her first spaceflight aboard Discovery in December 2006 on a 13-day mission. During the flight, Higginbotham operated the International Space Station's robotic arm as the crew reconfigured the ISS's power and cooling systems. She earned her undergraduate degree from Southern Illinois University in electrical engineering. After working three years at the Kennedy Space Center, she went back to school for an advanced degree in engineering management at the Florida Institute of Technology where she earned a master's degree in space systems while working full-time. She applied for NASA's astronaut corps in 1995 and was selected for the 1996 class.

On May 23, the Adler Women's Board will present the annual Women in Space Science Award to Higginbotham. The ticketed evening celebration includes a keynote address to attendees, a cocktail reception and dinner. The afternoon of May 23, Higginbotham will also meet with CPS students who will be hand-selected by their teachers.

Tickets for the Women in Space Science Award Celebration are \$150 each; sponsorship levels range from \$1,500 – \$30,000. Please call the Women's Board Office at 312-322-0523 for ticket or sponsorship information.

The Women's Board of the Adler Planetarium seeks to inspire scientific curiosity and literacy among young people. In 2006, the Women's Board raised \$500,000 to support education outreach programs.

About the Adler Planetarium

The Adler Planetarium — America's First Planetarium — was founded in 1930 by Chicago business leader Max Adler. The museum has announced a new vision to be the world's leading space science center. The museum will inspire the next generation of explorers by sharing the stories of human space exploration and America's space heroes. The Adler is a recognized leader in science education, with a focus on inspiring young people to pursue careers in science. For photos and additional information, please visit www.adlerplanetarium.org.

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