



Contact: Lynda Bramble  
215.448.1176

**LEADING FRANKLIN INSTITUTE INNOVATOR**  
**DR. CAROL PARSSINEN LEAVES A RICH LEGACY**

**Philadelphia, PA – January 4, 2008 – Dr. Carol Parssinen**, Senior Vice President of The Franklin Institute's Center For Innovation in Science Learning, is relocating to Florida and the University of Tampa in mid-January. For the past fifteen years, Dr. Parssinen has worked tirelessly to make science relevant and accessible for those who visit or connect to The Franklin Institute. Thousands of teachers, girls and young women and Philadelphia School District students have been treated to her transformative educational programming. Her efforts have had far reaching national and international impact, infusing science with a positive freshness and enthusiasm for learning that has transcended every demographic barrier.

Parssinen joined The Franklin Institute as Vice President for Education Programs charged with responsibilities for public programming. Much to the delight of interested parents and students, she soon instituted Discovery Camp, a summer and spring break science camp, now in its fourteenth year. Dr. Parssinen was appointed Senior Vice President of the newly created Center for Innovation in Science Learning in 1995. Over these past 12 years, the Center for Innovation has demonstrated clearly that science centers can be deliberate agents of positive change for public education and in advancing public understanding of science. Carol's work has cemented the Institute's national reputation as a leader in teacher program development, gender and family learning, youth leadership and educational technology. Since 2000, she has been responsible for The Franklin's development of integrated data and voice communications systems, including access to internet2, a high-bandwidth private network of universities, schools and cultural institutions. The Franklin's website is the most visited science center online resource in the world.

Among the many grant-funded programs instituted under her watch have been the **National Science Partnership for Girl Scouts and Science Museums** (now operating in 26 states); **Partnerships in Achieving Careers in Technology and Science (PACTS)**, the Institute's signature leadership program for urban youth, now in its 15<sup>th</sup> year; and **TFI Online**. The Innovation Center has maintained a strong alliance with the School District of Philadelphia, providing professional development for teachers in grades K-8 and establishing model programs like Parent Partners in School Science. These enduring programs have served as the base for additional Innovation Center research projects and have become models for other science centers. "With each new program," says Parssinen, "we have built on our previous work and moved the bar for what science centers can accomplish. The continuing theme for our work is the partnership of science centers with schools. Over the years, I believe we have demonstrated that science centers can be deliberate agents of change in public education."

Nowhere is the Franklin Institute's commitment to public education more evident than in the **Science Leadership Academy (SLA)**, a small progressive magnet high school that partners the Institute with the School District of Philadelphia. SLA opened in September, 2006 with a freshman class of 115 students and will grow to be a four-year school by 2009. Parssinen is proud of the SLA program called '*Wednesdays at The Franklin*,' which offers freshmen students a weekly program of unique museum-based learning opportunities, simultaneously providing a pre-professional introduction to the workplace. She is also responsible for creating the SLA Ambassadors, a group of leaders from the university, business, civic and cultural communities who have agreed to open the door to student internships and serve as public advocates for the students and the SLA.

Looking forward, Parssinen, armed with a PhD in English and American Literature, will return to the university classroom as a teacher of literature for undergraduates. Her parting gifts to The Franklin Institute include a new learning platform for interactive exhibitry online, as well as a five-year grant from the National Science Foundation which appropriately connects science and literacy. "**LEAP into Science**," a collaboration with the Free Library of Philadelphia, will demonstrate how museums and

libraries across the country can engage urban families in science activities based on books and reading. "Come February, I can't imagine coming to work without my colleague, my friend and my inspiration." said Karen

Corbin, Senior Vice President for Programs, Marketing and Business Development. “The work remains. Carol would always say to me “Ever Onward.” We certainly owe it to this remarkable woman to continue her work, giving it our best as she did every day.”

Parssinen’s successor will be named in the weeks to come.

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One of only four cities in the U.S. chosen to host “*Tutankhamun and The Golden Age of Pharaohs*,” The Franklin Institute has experienced tremendous growth over the past few years, **welcoming over 1.75 million visitors in 2007**. Its new capital campaign, *Inspiring Science!*, will expand The Franklin’s footprint by 43,000 square feet, making room for new permanent exhibits, *Amazing Machines*, *Changing Earth*, *Electricity* and *The Bigger Brain* in 2010. **February 9 – May 4, 2008, Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination** comes to The Franklin. In October, The Franklin hosts scientists from around the world for the annual conference of the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC). For tickets and more information: [www.curiousf.org](http://www.curiousf.org) or call 215-448-1200.