



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TICKETS ON SALE TOMORROW FOR
GALILEO, THE MEDICI AND THE AGE OF ASTRONOMY
Special Exhibition Makes The Franklin Its Exclusive Home in 2009**

Philadelphia, PA, March 5, 2009 – The Franklin, the most-visited museum in Pennsylvania and a Top Twenty most visited museum in the United States*, has announced that tickets will go on sale Friday, March 6 for the world exclusive exhibit *Galileo, the Medici and the Age of Astronomy* presented by Officine Panerai, and opening April 4. The exhibit, timed to take place during the 400th anniversary of Galileo's astronomical discoveries as well as the International Year of Astronomy, will explore the extraordinary effect that Galileo's work, as well as that of other luminaries during the age of the Medicis, had on science and on the world – and will feature one of only two remaining telescopes owned and built by Galileo.

The one-time only special exhibition at The Franklin was created in partnership with the *Istituto e Museo della Storia di Scienza* of Florence, Philadelphia's Sister City, and the Medici Archive Project and is presented by the Italian fine watchmaking company Officine Panerai, in recognition of its Tuscan origins and tradition linked to the measurement of time. The Franklin was chosen following hundreds of requests for loans of Galileo's telescope during this extraordinary anniversary year.

From April 4-September 7, 2009, the exhibition will add its star power to Philadelphia's premier location for astronomy and space exploration. The exhibit will comprise approximately 7,000 square feet and contain more than 100 artifacts from the *Istituto's* collections, as well as collections from the Uffizi Gallery. The Franklin's exclusive exhibition will mark the first time these artifacts are shown together, providing a rare opportunity to tell the story of Galileo Galilei and the Medici dynasty.

In addition to Galileo's telescope, the exhibition showcases the father of astronomy's accomplishments, his relationship to the Medicis, his discoveries, and his overall impact on not only astronomy, but modern science. The fascinating age of the Medicis will be explored – an age when the patronage of the ruling Medici Grand Dukes created a burst of scientific knowledge that transformed the course of mankind. This wealthy and powerful Florentine family ruled from the 15th to the 18th century, included two popes and many cardinals, and was known for its unparalleled advocacy and patronage of art and science. The exhibit will shed light on the union of art, science and political power that gave rise to Galileo's success. The Medicis were prolific collectors, and the exhibit will also be highlighted by an eclectic range of scientific instruments, along with an assortment of paintings, prints and manuscripts from organizations and regions of Italy. Visitors to The Franklin will be able to experience a rich portrait of their accomplishments, not only in astronomy, but in navigation, math, military and early machinery.

The Franklin and Philadelphia will also be creating an ambitious series of programs centered on the exhibit's concepts, from lectures and educational programs to special multi-media programming events from its famous Fels Planetarium. *The Franklin is the oldest and largest science museum in the United States with both a working telescopic observatory and a state-of-the-art planetarium* Through the exhibit, as well as its programming efforts, The Franklin will explore a cluster of



important topics: Galileo's influence in prompting the intellectual shift from Aristotelian natural philosophy to experimental methods that are still central to contemporary scientific methods; the interdisciplinary nature of Italian Renaissance culture, in which art, politics, religion and science were intertwined; an understanding of Galileo's conflict with the church and the society of his time; and the interrelations of science and religion in the present-day – both positive and contentious.

This quadricentennial celebration of the modern era of astronomy has also inspired an extraordinary worldwide effort entitled the International Year of Astronomy (IYA2009), which will be launched in early 2009 by The International Astronomical Union (IAU) under the theme, "The Universe, Yours to Discover." The Franklin's Chief Astronomer, Derrick Pitts, was recently named United States spokesman for the effort. This is a highly organized global celebration of astronomy and its contributions to society and culture, with a strong emphasis on education, public engagement and the involvement of young people, with events at national, regional and global levels throughout the whole of 2009. UNESCO has endorsed the IYA2009 and the United Nations proclaimed the year 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy.

TICKET INFORMATION

Galileo, the Medici and the Age of Astronomy ticket pricing at The Franklin follows:

Single Tickets (Daytime, 9:30am – 5pm)

- Adults: \$20.75
- Senior, student, military (with ID): \$19.75
- Children ages 4-11: \$14.00

Tickets are timed and dated, and include general admission to The Franklin with a Fels Planetarium show. Admission is 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. 7 days a week. There will be special evening hours with discounted rates for summer. Advance ticket purchase is strongly recommended. For information on purchasing tickets, please call 1.877.TFI.TIXS or visit www.fi.edu. Information on tickets for groups of 15 or more is available at 1.800.285.0684. To plan a trip or book a stay, please visit www.gophila.com/GALILEO.

Additional sponsors include **Celestron**, who has been named the Astronomy Sponsor of *Galileo* and sponsor of The Franklin's popular monthly "Night Skies in the Observatory" program for 2009. **PECO**, Proud Corporate Partner of The Franklin Institute, is the Community Sponsor of *Galileo* and **West Pharmaceutical Services** will serve as the official *Galileo* Gala Sponsor. Lead Underwriting support provided by A. Bruce Mainwaring and additional underwriting support provided by GlaxoSmithKline, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and John Diebel. Marketing support is provided by grants from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation. Media partner is WPVI-TV 6ABC.

About The Franklin

Located in the heart of Philadelphia, The Franklin Institute is a renowned and innovative leader in the field of science and technology learning, as well as a dynamic center of activity. Pennsylvania's most visited museum, it is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology. For more information: www.fi.edu.

*Forbes Traveler, September 21, 2007