



**PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Stefanie Santo 215.448.1152

**LOCAL NASA ASTRONAUT AND SPACE SHUTTLE COMMANDER  
CHRISTOPHER FERGUSON VISITS THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE**

*Free public evening event on Wednesday, December 2*

**Philadelphia, PA – November 25, 2009** – The Franklin Institute welcomes Philadelphia native and NASA Commander Christopher Ferguson for a very special public event on Wednesday, December 2. Commander Ferguson’s visit will coincide with the Rittenhouse Astronomical Society’s monthly meeting where he will address the public and speak on his vast experience as a NASA pilot and astronaut. He will provide an update on the *International Space Station* and as the space shuttle mission winds to a close, the Commander will talk about the direction of human space flight in the future.

Commander Ferguson was the pilot of **Space Shuttle Atlantis** on his first mission to space, STS-115, in 2006. He also successfully commanded STS-126 aboard **Space Shuttle Endeavour**. As the commander of STS-400, his crew was poised to rescue a May 2009 mission to service the Hubble space telescope if necessary. He has logged over 28 days in space. A graduate of Drexel University, he was commissioned from the Navy ROTC program at the University of Pennsylvania before eventually entering the space program.

The evening begins at 7:30pm in Franklin Hall with the presentation by Commander Ferguson followed by a Q&A. After the event, attendees are invited to visit the Joel N. Bloom Observatory at 9pm for night sky viewing. The event is free and open to the public, seating is first come, first serve. For more information, please visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).

**About the Rittenhouse Astronomical Society**

The Rittenhouse Astronomical Society is one of the oldest astronomy clubs in North America. The group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:30PM in the Fels Planetarium at The Franklin Institute. The society offers all persons an opportunity to participate in the activities of an astronomical group at the layman's level. They aim to spread knowledge, awareness, and enjoyment of astronomy and astronomical issues. No experience is necessary to attend the FREE meetings.

[www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org](http://www.rittenhouseastronomicalsociety.org)

**About The Franklin Institute**

Founded in honor of America’s first scientist, Benjamin Franklin, 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. It is dedicated to creating a passion for science by offering new and exciting access to science and technology in ways that would dazzle and delight its namesake. For more information, please visit [www.fi.edu](http://www.fi.edu).