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ATTENTION: News/Science/Education/Family Section Reporters

H.R. MACMILLAN SPACE CENTRE CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY AS CANADA'S LEADING SPACE EDUCATION CENTRE

Vancouver, BC, Jan. 30, 2008 – The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre celebrates its 40th year as not only a Vancouver institution, but a key contributor to space education in Canada.

According to Space Centre executive director Donna Livingstone, with those forty years come new questions and purpose.

“Since the Space Centre opened in 1968 under its original name, the Planetarium, the space story has changed. We have moved from a technologically competitive “space race” to an era that is now being described as “society in space,” said Livingstone.

“Now that we have actually explored Mars and are reaching into the universe, we can see the fragile uniqueness of our own planet. Our questions about space are different. Should we be there? Who owns the stuff we find in space. And, more importantly, what is space telling us about our own planet?”

In the coming months, the Space Centre will be answering these and other questions with new exhibits, events and shows designed to provoke, excite and challenge visitors, and ultimately put the “planet” back into “Planetarium”.

Some milestones from the Space Centre's past 40 years:

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| 1967 | BC Lumber baron H.R. MacMillan donated \$1.5 million to build a Planetarium in Vancouver. Vanier Park was chosen as the location. |
| 1968 | On Oct. 28, the new Planetarium and Museum complex was opened. The first Planetarium show was <i>The Way of All Stars</i> , presented live by John Tanner who remains on staff today. The show featured the use of the Zeiss Jena star projector (later to be known as ‘Harold’). It was purchased for \$250,000 which included training for four staff members at the Zeiss factory in Jena, as well as installation of the projector in Vancouver. To replace Harold with a similar type of projector would now cost several million dollars. |
| 1977 | The Planetarium, in conjunction with the USSR, hosted one of its largest events ever, Kosmos ‘77, a space exhibit from Russia. |
| 1979 | Mrs. G.T. (Jean) Southam, daughter of the late H.R. MacMillan, and her husband Gordon, donated \$250,000 to the Planetarium toward the construction of an adjacent Observatory. |

- 1988 The 20th anniversary was celebrated in true Planetarium style with an innovative program called “Interstellar Suite”. Ken Hewitt-White, the director at that time, wrote and produced this one-of-a-kind planetarium show on the history of space with no narration and music composed specifically for a Planetarium by young Canadian composer, Amin Bhatia.
- 1993 An aerospace symposium for educators was held during three days in October with speakers from all over North America and beyond.
- 1997 October was filled with special events for the opening of the new Pacific Space Centre, including a simulator ride, a 90-seat demonstration theatre and an interactive exhibit gallery. The opening was attended by municipal, provincial and federal dignitaries. The honour of officially opening the Space Centre was given to Canadian astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason and Russian cosmonaut Valeri Korzun.
- 2002 The Gordon Southam MacMillan Observatory was refurbished and a new telescope, designed by local telescope experts, AMEC, was installed.
- 2003 The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre hosted 18,000 people at Vanier Park who gathered over four evenings to catch a glimpse of Mars at its closest proximity in 60,000 years.
- 2007 *Sky Stories: A First Nations Journey*, a ground-breaking new planetarium show, opened at the Space Centre. Two years in the making, the show draws on the talents and knowledge of First Nations educators, performers, artists and Elders.

The H.R. MacMillan Space Centre is a non-profit community resource that brings the wonders of space to Earth, while providing a personal sense of ongoing discovery. Through innovative programming, exhibits and activities, our goal is to inspire sustained interest in the fields of Earth science, space science and astronomy from a Canadian perspective.

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