



For Immediate Release
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California Science Center Marks Passing of David J. Combs, Former Deputy Director for Education

An education endowment fund is established in his memory

Los Angeles – Dr. David J. Combs, former Deputy Director for Education at the California Science Center, died Tuesday, October 31, 2006 of brain cancer at Methodist Hospital in Arcadia, California. He was 48. He is survived by his wife Lisa and two children, Alex, 19, and Allyson, 17, of Arcadia, California, parents, David and Geraldine Combs, sister, Judith Roy, all of Florida, and brother, Dr. Arthur Combs of Missouri.

Combs graduated with high honors from the University of Notre Dame in 1980 and received his Ph.D. in physiology from the University of Michigan in 1985. He worked for the University of Kentucky as an assistant research professor where he taught physiology and biophysics. He also conducted research studies for the Cerebrovascular and Brain Injury labs in the Division of Neurosurgery.

Combs joined the former California Museum of Science and Industry in 1991 as the life sciences curator, and was responsible for all phases of exhibits on life sciences and chemistry. He developed working relationships with public and private sectors of the scientific community from which he received input and support for his projects. When the museum reinvented itself to become the California Science Center in 1998, Combs' led the collaborative effort that resulted in the World of Life gallery, a learning environment on life sciences that was informative and fun. Tess, the 50-ft. human body simulator who explains homeostasis and has become an icon for the Science Center, incorporates the educational content and impact Combs sought for all the exhibits he helped to develop.

In 1999, Combs was appointed Deputy Director for Education and oversaw the operation of the Amgen Center for Science Learning, the educational arm of the California Science Center. Programs such as summer science camp, school field trip experiences, science demonstrations for the public, community programs, and professional development for teachers are some of the educational experiences that thrived as a result of his vision and leadership. Combs was instrumental in helping form the Science Center's role for the Science Center School and in planning the new program space for the Amgen Center for Science Learning, which both opened in 2004.

Jeffrey N. Rudolph, California Science Center President and CEO said, "I am deeply saddened by the untimely passing of Dave Combs. The Science Center benefited in so many ways from his exceptional leadership, management and enthusiasm for science. Dave led the development of the World of Life gallery and was the leader of the Science Center team in development of the program and curriculum for the Science Center School. He also led the expansion of the education division into the Amgen Center for Science Learning to offer a dynamic array of public programming. Although he was an accomplished academician, he knew how to make science fun and accessible. On a personal note, I will miss his friendship, good humor and optimistic approach to life."

David Heil, President of David Heil & Associates and former host for the Emmy-award winning PBS science series *Newton's Apple*, who worked extensively with Combs as a consultant performing strategic and business planning for both the Science Center School and the Amgen Center for Science Learning, made the following statement: "David's inspirational leadership and passion for science learning impacted not only the California Science Center, but the entire science center community nationwide. His experience as an accomplished research scientist prior to joining the California Science Center allowed him to bring to the field a deep understanding and appreciation for the nature of scientific discovery. He continually looked for ways to share this insight with his colleagues in the field, his staff and visitors to the exhibits and programs that he administered at the Science Center. As a friend and colleague, I was inspired early on

by how well he managed to balance his exciting work in science with his dedication and active involvement with his family. From coaching soccer to designing new science learning experiences for families, David's energy and enthusiasm for life was a special gift that he shared with many."

A celebration of life will be held at the California Science Center in The Big Lab of the Wallis Annenberg Building at 4:30 pm on Thursday, November 16, 2006, followed by a reception.

In recognition of Combs' commitment to science learning, the Combs family welcomes memorial gifts to the California Science Center Foundation for the **Dave Combs Educational Endowment Fund**. Proceeds from the **Combs Endowment Fund** will support education programs at the Science Center in his memory. Gifts should be mailed to: California Science Center Foundation, 700 State Drive, Los Angeles, CA, 90037, attn: William Harris. For more information, please contact William Harris at (213) 744-2529.

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