



For Immediate Release

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California Science Center 9th Annual Star Wars Themed Discovery Ball Raises Funds for Science Learning

Los Angeles, CA – The California Science Center’s Discovery Ball gala, which raises funds to support the Science Center’s educational exhibits and programs, surpassed all previous records for fundraising, glamour and stellar ingenuity. More than 850 guests attended the gala co-chaired by Rosanne O’Brien of Northrop Grumman and philanthropist Margo Leonetti O’Connell. “With the help of many generous business and community leaders, this year’s Discovery Ball grossed more than \$1.14 million, breaking all previous gala records,” said co-chair Rosanne O’Brien. Co-chair Margo Leonetti O’Connell added, “We are so grateful for these generous proceeds which will support science learning programs in our community and region.”

The gala’s decor and entertainment were inspired by the exhibit, *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination*, which is regionally sponsored by Northrop Grumman and continues at the Science Center through April 29. Star Wars characters were out-in-force, providing a lively atmosphere, courtesy of The 501st Legion, a group of Star Wars fan volunteers that provided more than 60 costumed characters for the evening.

An auction conducted by KNBC weatherman Fritz Coleman raised more than \$100,000 and guests were serenaded by the “Ace of Hearts” orchestra as they dined aboard the “Imperial Star Destroyer”. A light saber battle between Storm Troopers and Rebel Soldiers culminated with the grand entrance of Darth Vader, accompanied by his signature raspy breathing amplified through the speakers. It was a stunning start to the evening’s program led by Science Center President, Jeffrey Rudolph who noted that, “The Discovery Ball’s support for our exhibits and programs helps to provide a steady foundation while our Phase II expansion is under construction. Our success moves us closer to our goal of creating a national model for science learning and education.”

The evening began with Storm Troopers, dressed in white armor flanking the “black carpet” which was walked by a number of distinguished business and community leaders including: Wallis Annenberg, Vice President, The Annenberg Foundation; Danny Bakewell, Sr., Publisher, Los Angeles Sentinel; William Chadwick, Chair, California Science Center Board of Directors; Dr. Jean-Lou Chameau, President, California Institute of Technology; Charles Elachi, Ph.D., Director, NASA Jet

Propulsion Laboratory; David Hiller, Publisher, Los Angeles Times; Paula Madison, President and General Manager, KNBC and Los Angeles Regional General Manager, NBC/Telemundo; Conan Nolan KNBC anchor and host of “News Conference”; and Gary Toebben, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.

Political leaders in attendance included: Maxine Waters, U.S. House of Representatives; Diane Watson, U.S. House of Representatives; George Deukmejian, Former Governor of California; Mike Davis, California State Assembly; Mervyn Dymally, California State Assembly; Mark Ridley-Thomas, California State Senate; Roderick Wright, Former California State Assemblymember; Rosario Marin, Secretary, California State and Consumer Services Agency; James Hahn, Former Mayor of Los Angeles; and Los Angeles City Council members Janice Hahn, Tom LaBonge, Bernard Parks, Jan Perry and Herb Wesson.

Located just south of downtown Los Angeles in Exposition Park, the California Science Center is one of Southern California’s premier family destinations. The Science Center’s mission is to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences and has welcomed over 12.5 million visitors since its grand opening in February of 1998.

About the California Science Center

The California Science Center’s mission statement is as follows:” We aspire to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone by creating fun, memorable experiences, because we value science as an indispensable tool for understanding our world, accessibility and inclusiveness, and enriching people’s lives.”

The Science Center and IMAX Theater are located in historic Exposition Park, Los Angeles. Open daily from 10am to 5pm except Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Day. Admission to Science Center exhibits is free. IMAX tickets vary from \$8.00 for adults to \$4.75 for children 4-12. For recorded information on show times, phone (213) 744-7400. Tickets are available at the Box Office or online at www.californiasciencecenter.org. For advance IMAX ticket purchases, group rates, or to make reservations for any visiting group of 15+ (*required*), call (213) 744-2019. Parking is available in the guest lot at Figueroa and 39th/Coliseum Street at \$6 per car. Both the Science Center and IMAX Theater are wheelchair accessible. Proceeds from the IMAX Theater support California Science Center exhibits and education programs.

About Northrop Grumman – Regional Sponsor of *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination* Exhibit

Northrop Grumman Corporation is a \$30 billion global defense and technology company whose 120,000 employees provide innovative systems, products, and solutions in information and services, electronics, aerospace and shipbuilding to government and commercial customers worldwide.

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