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Charles Lamar Family Foundation Sponsors *In Saturn's Rings* in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Art & Science Museum has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from the **Charles Lamar Family Foundation** for the licensing of *In Saturn's Rings* for the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium. Expected to premiere in Spring 2020, *In Saturn's Rings* is a groundbreaking cinematic adventure that will take visitors on a journey from the Big Bang to the iconic rings of Saturn using millions of images taken by various telescopes and space missions, including the Cassini-Huygens Mission. The grant also awarded \$10,000 for a new projection system in the Josephine Pugh Lamar classrooms for a total award of \$35,000.

"The Irene W. Pennington Planetarium has anxiously awaited the release of *In Saturn's Rings* since its planning was first announced in 2014," said Sheree Westerhaus, LASM's Director of Operations & Planetarium. "We knew that it would offer a unique experience for our audiences and engage them on many levels, from the beauty of our universe to the uniqueness of Earth. This planetarium show, in a way, is much like space exploration itself!"

Narrated by *Star Trek: The Next Generation* actor LeVar Burton, *In Saturn's Rings* utilizes no CGI effects or 3D modeling of any kind. Instead, over fifty volunteers painstakingly integrated more than 7.5 million still images taken during the Cassini-Huygens Mission, Sloan Digital Sky Survey, Hubble Telescope time-lapses, and more. Many of these images have never been seen by the public, utilizing widely-available software like Adobe Photoshop and GIMP.

"Considering the community involvement and scientific effort it took to create this amazing film, LASM sees *In Saturn's Rings* as a perfect melding of art and science; this planetarium show is an encapsulation of the curiosity and passion for discovery that we seek to foster in our visitors," said Serena Pandos, LASM's President & Executive Director. "We envision our community as lifelong explorers inspired by art and science, much like the volunteers who came together to create this stunning program."

In addition to being added to the rotation of planetarium shows for the general public, the Museum plans to incorporate *In Saturn's Rings* into its science education programming, which served over 105,000 school program participants from nearly forty parishes and five counties in Mississippi in 2019.

“We have learned so much about Saturn from the Cassini-Huygens Mission; this program in particular will allow LASM to engage with students on the subjects of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics in addition to being entertaining,” said Pandos. “Data collected by the Museum throughout 2019 shows that our education programs are attracting more and more program participants each year from East Baton Rouge, surrounding parishes, and beyond — an increase of nearly seven percent when compared to 2018. We cannot thank The Charles Lamar Family Foundation enough for their investment, which assists us in growing these programs to keep pace with the demands of our community and education partners.”

For more information on the Louisiana Art & Science Museum and its programs, visit lasm.org. Support the Art & Science Museum’s mission and programs at lasm.org/give.

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Images: The rings of Saturn are the most extensive ring system of any planet in our Solar System. They consist of countless small particles of ice and rock, ranging in size from a grain of sand to a semi-trailer truck. This image was taken by the Cassini Orbiter on October 6, 2004.

About the Louisiana Art & Science Museum

A nonprofit organization housed on the banks of the Mississippi River in downtown Baton Rouge, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum enhances the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational, and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge. More information about the Art & Science Museum is available at lasm.org.

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