



Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium History and Future

In 1949, the Junior League of Miami determined that Miami-Dade County's children needed a science museum. The Junior Museum of Miami, a private non-profit organization, was established in 1950 in a house on the corner of Biscayne Boulevard and 26th Street. The Junior Museum expanded so quickly that in 1952 it moved to the Miami Women's Club building on Bayshore Drive. It was then christened the Museum of Science and Natural History.

In 1953, the Guild of the Museum of Science was formed. Their efforts included volunteer assistance to the staff, operation of the Museum Store, as well as tours and outreach programs. By 1960, the first building of the community's new science museum opened its doors. The facility, located on three acres of the historic Vizcaya complex, gained national recognition with innovative programs spanning from astronomy to zoology.

With the construction of the Planetarium in late 1966, the renamed Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium grew into a landmark institution credited for its excellence in providing South Florida with constant developments in science and technology, while providing fun and educational, interactive exhibits and programming. Acclaimed for its technology training of educators, exemplary youth programs and highly visited website, the Museum continues to grow through its planetarium programming and Wildlife Center operations.

Today, the Museum presents new, innovative and interesting exhibits every three to four months; Planetarium and Wildlife Center programs; and special events for the entire family. The Museum also continues to work with a number of civic and non-profit organizations including Mineral and Lapidary Guild, Horticultural Society, Institute of Mayan Studies, Rare Fruit Council, The Fossil Club, MAC Users and the Junior League of Miami.

The Museum, however, again began outgrowing its new space. During the last decade, it has expanded to provide space for 4,000 member families, almost 300,000 annual visitors on and off site, the largest educational facility in the South Florida region, one of the largest summer science camps in the nation (ages 3 to 14) and countless additional exhibits, collections and activities including birthday parties. It has also developed a very active educational web site, with more than four million hits each month.

The Museum's summer camp program offers more than 150 classes that explore the sciences, environment, rocketry, photography, digital video, computers, sailing, snorkeling, magic and engineering, among others. Birthday parties at the Museum are unforgettable. They include hands-on exhibits, real live animals and planetarium shows.

Responding to the region's needs, the vision for the new Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium has been shaped by current needs and forecasts for the future. The new facility, which will be located in downtown Miami's Bicentennial Park, promises to enhance residents' quality of life, bolster tourism and address critical education gaps in this community and throughout the hemisphere. It will fortify South Florida's emergence as an international axis for economic, scientific and cultural exchange, ultimately fostering cross-cultural understanding. The Museum will further expand its role as a pipeline for first-generation, low-income minority youth to pursue college degrees and careers in the sciences and engineering. State-of-the-art technology training curriculum and learning labs will directly reinforce South Florida's future as a communications hub.

As part of the Museum's fundraising efforts for the new facility, the Museum is working with private, public and governmental organizations. In November 2001, Miami voters endorsed the Museum's expansion plans at Bicentennial Park with the passage of a bond referendum, which included funding for the Park's redevelopment and \$3.5 million in seed money. In November 2004, Miami-Dade County voters approved the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond Program, which includes \$175 million for construction of the new Museum.

The Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium is poised to create a great cultural landmark. Bolstered by the Museum's affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution, the envisioned new Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium will expand the Museum's reach throughout the hemisphere. The new Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium will serve as an international cultural destination and a world-class landmark for Miami.

The Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium is located at 3280 S. Miami Avenue, Miami, FL 33129. Telephone: (305) 646-4224. Fax: (305) 646-4300
www.miamisci.org.

The Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium, founded in 1949, is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution. The Museum was recently named recipient of the National Award for Museum Service by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, only one of three Museums in the country selected for this prestigious distinction.

Major operating support for the Museum is received from Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Institute of Museum and Library Services; and the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Arts Council.

###