



## **Dr. Stephen Hawking Visits Chabot Space & Science Center** **— World Renowned Cosmologist Views New Planetarium—**

18 October 2005 -- (Oakland, CA) During a rare public lecture tour, Dr. Stephen Hawking visited Chabot Space & Science Center on Thursday, November 10 as part of private donor event to view the capabilities of the newly upgraded planetarium system, before his evening lecture at the Paramount Theater. The audience was treated to *Immersive Space: Fly Through the Cosmos*, a planetarium show that utilizes the full-dome digital system and the Digital Universe database.

When asked by Executive Director Alex Barnett what he thought about the experience, Dr. Hawking responded, "Spectacular." At the end of the presentation, Hawking made a few prerecorded remarks. "There weren't so many streetlights when I grew up, and they turned off at midnight. So from time to time I caught a view of the Milky Way, which led to my interest in cosmology. It is tempting to speculate how different the development of science would have been if the atmosphere had been less clear or our eyesight would have been slightly less good. We wouldn't have seen the motion of the heavenly bodies, which first revealed the existence of natural laws governing the universe. Astronomy and cosmology have continued to inspire our quest for knowledge, and are leading our understanding of our place in the universe."

The *Immersive Space* show whisks the audience to the nearest star and beyond in merely seconds, utilizing real space images from the Digital Universe database. Viewers travel 1,000 light years to Orion; 2 million light years to the Andromeda galaxy, home to a super massive black hole; and 10 million light years to other galaxies in the Local Group. The journey takes them to the furthest edge of the known universe and takes a peek at what's on the other side.

Professor Hawking – at the forefront of research on both black holes and the origins of the universe – was on a rare public lecture tour about his current hypotheses about the Origin of the Universe. NASA's Swift satellite, in just the last few months, has revealed startling new details of black hole formation. The Swift observations challenge us to consider a dramatically different view – one that entails multiple explosive outbursts, not just a single bang, as previously thought. World-renowned cosmologist and author of the best-selling book *A Brief History of Time*, Hawking holds the prestigious chair at Cambridge University, the Lucasian professorship, once held by Sir Isaac Newton. The three-city tour to San Jose, Oakland and Seattle was organized by the Institute for Science, Engineering and Public Policy (ISEPP) and was sponsored by Mentor Graphics, a technology leader in electronic design automation, headquartered in Wilsonville, Oregon.

**Chabot Space and Science Center**, a Smithsonian affiliate, is a 501c3 nonprofit interactive science center focusing on astronomy and the inter-relationships of all the sciences. Its observatory, planetarium, exhibits, and natural park setting are a place where a diverse population of students, teachers, and the public can imagine, understand, and learn to shape their future through science. The Center is located at 10000 Skyline Blvd. in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park.

**For more information, call (510) 336-7300, or visit [www.chabotspace.org](http://www.chabotspace.org)**

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