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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GREAT LAKES SCIENCE CENTER OPENING *DARWIN* JUNE 27**  
*Exhibition coincides with Year of Darwin – 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his birth*  
*And 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publishing of Origin of Species*

Cleveland – April 23, 2009 – *Darwin*, an in-depth exhibition dedicated to the highly original naturalist, Charles Darwin, and his theory of evolution by natural selection, opens at Great Lakes Science Center June 27, 2009 and runs through September 19, 2009. This comprehensive exhibition features specimens, artifacts, manuscripts and memorabilia related to Darwin. 2009 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Darwin and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publishing of *Origin of Species*. The Science Center is collaborating with several organizations, including Case Western Reserve University, ideastream, Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Cuyahoga County Public Library.

*Darwin* offers visitors an engaging and enlightening exploration of the extraordinary life and mind of Charles Darwin (1809–1882), whose curiosity, observations and discoveries nearly 150 years ago forever changed the perception of the origin and nature of our own species, as well as the myriad of other species on this planet, and launched modern biological science. Visitors experience the wonders Darwin witnessed on his journey as a curious and adventurous young man aboard the HMS *Beagle* on its historic five-year voyage (1831–1836) to South America, the Galápagos Islands, and beyond.

“We’re very excited to be hosting this exhibition, as it is crucial to our mission to help the public understand Charles Darwin, the man and the scientist,” said Linda Abraham-Silver, president

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and CEO of Great Lakes Science Center. “We want our visitors to understand the importance of Darwin’s theories and how they impact the field of modern biological science and our perception of our world.”

### **The Exhibition**

The exhibition is divided into nine sections, with some highlights including:

- *A Trip Around the World* – the large area devoted to Darwin’s five-year voyage aboard the HMS *Beagle* is filled with colorful and detailed re-creations of the environments and creatures Darwin witnessed in his travels, from marine iguanas to vermilion flycatchers and frigate birds to the amazing daisy tree.
- *A Life’s Work* – part of the exhibition features an elaborate reconstruction of the naturalist’s study at Down House, where, as a keen observer and dedicated experimenter, he proposed the revolutionary theory that all life evolves according to the mechanism of natural selection. It was a theory that Darwin would keep secret for 21 years while he continued his research and studies. Rare objects on display, coupled with descriptive text, illuminate the patterns he observed among species, which led to the publication of the astonishing and brilliant *The Origin of Species*, wherein he assembled the massive evidence of life’s diversity, animal and plant domestication, and the geologic and fossil record to support his theory of evolution.
- *Evolution Today* – contemporary examples of modern evolutionary research are arrayed around the re-creation of Darwin’s study, showing how his original perspectives and theory have been enhanced and enriched by subsequent discoveries in paleontology, genetics and molecular biology.

At different points in the exhibition, visitors are encouraged to touch specimens—such as the reproduction of a **giant glyptodont skeleton** (a prehistoric armored mammal)—and observe other items, such as samples of petrified wood, using a simple hand lens, just as Darwin did in developing and testing his groundbreaking theories.

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Visitors learn how Darwin arrived at the startling conclusion that life on Earth is not static, but changing, and how his controversial theory of natural selection offered a mechanism to explain the existence of the amazing diversity of life on Earth. These insights continue to guide museum scientists and their colleagues worldwide today as they apply Darwinian concepts to global inventories of life, conservation biology, reconstruction of the evolutionary Tree of Life, and the treatment of diseases ranging from AIDS to SARS.

### **Promotions and Programming**

Great Lakes Science Center has developed several special programs offered in conjunction with the exhibition:

#### ***Darwin* Premiere**

In collaboration with Case Western Reserve University, the Science Center will be celebrating the opening of the exhibition with a special *Darwin* premiere the night of Saturday, June 27, complete with tours of the exhibition, cocktails, a light dinner and live demonstrations. The premiere will benefit Great Lakes Science Center's science camps and educational programs. Educators will be the focus of the evening, and those purchasing tickets are encouraged to bring them as guests. To reserve tickets or for more information, please call Kathy Grant at (216) 696-4521.

#### **Lecture by William F. McComas, Ph.D., University of Arkansas**

Evolution is the most important concept in modern biology but is also one of the most misunderstood from scientific and historical perspectives. Dr. McComas' lecture will focus on the key aspects of evolution by natural selection, widely held misconceptions regarding the nature of evolution itself, the mechanism of natural selection, the role of the Galapagos Islands - finches, tortoises and mockingbirds on Darwin's thinking, and the fascinating parallel discovery of natural selection by Alfred Russel Wallace. Visitors will have free admission to the *Darwin* exhibition. The lecture will be Monday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m. at Great Lakes Science Center. Reservations required. Please call 216-621-2400.

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### ***Galápagos* in the OMNIMAX Theater**

Visitors can experience the Science Center's OMNIMAX Theater as they watch *Galápagos*, one of this summer's new featured films. Take a journey with marine biologists as they delve deep into this largely unknown water surrounding the volcanic archipelago.

### **Explore Your World Sweepstakes**

Charles Darwin's explorations took him to South America, the Galápagos Islands and beyond. Where in the world would you go? See *Darwin* and enter to win two round-trip tickets to the Continental destination of your choice, courtesy of Continental Airlines. Valid for flights operated by Continental Airlines only. Sweepstakes begin June 27, 2009. Get details at the box office or at [www.GreatScience.com](http://www.GreatScience.com). No purchase necessary.

### **Related Programs**

#### ***Visions of Galápagos***

The Cleveland Museum of Natural History presents *Visions of Galápagos* July 18 - October 11, 2009. *Visions of Galápagos* combines historical objects from the museum's collections with items from the Dittrick Medical History Center related to Darwin's famous journey to the Galápagos. Paired with these historic artifacts will be the colorful visionary paintings of Galápagos animals by Cleveland Heights artist Seth Chwast. For more information, visit [www.cmnh.org](http://www.cmnh.org).

### **Darwin on display at Cuyahoga County Public Library**

Cuyahoga County Public Library will feature special Darwin-related displays on view at all 28 branches during the month of July. Offered in conjunction with the *Darwin* exhibition, each display will showcase books, CDs and DVDs about Charles Darwin and will include brochures and a poster promoting the exhibition at Great Lakes Science Center.

### **Admission**

Admission to the exhibition is free to Great Lakes Science Center members. Exhibition entry is \$12.50 for adult non-members and \$10.50 for children, and includes museum exhibits admission.

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### **Partner discounts**

Great Lakes Science Center is offering special admission discounts to the members of its partner organizations. Members of Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Cleveland Botanical Garden can present their membership cards at the Great Lakes Science Center box office to receive a \$2 discount on admission to *Darwin*. Similarly, Cuyahoga County Public Library card holders can take advantage of the \$2 discount by presenting their library cards at the Great Lakes Science Center box office. The special discounts are valid throughout the run of the exhibition from June 27 – September 19, 2009.

*Darwin* is organized by the American Museum of Natural History in collaboration with the Museum of Science, Boston; The Field Museum, Chicago; the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada; and the Natural History Museum, London, England. Local support is provided by John P. Murphy Foundation, Parker-Hannifin Corporation, Continental Airlines and Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. Promotional support is provided by WVIZ/PBS, 90.3 ideastream and Cleveland Magazine.

### **About the Great Lakes Science Center**

The Great Lakes Science Center is one of the nation's leading science and technology centers, featuring more than 400 hands-on exhibits, themed traveling exhibits, daily demonstrations, the awe-inspiring OMNIMAX<sup>®</sup> Theater and the steamship *William G. Mather*. The Science Center is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with discounted parking available for guests in the attached 500-car garage. The Great Lakes Science Center is generously funded by the citizens of Cuyahoga County through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture. For more information, contact the Science Center at (216) 694-2000 or visit [www.GreatScience.com](http://www.GreatScience.com).

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