

## **CICLOPS MEDIA RELATIONS NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Porco joins Space Science Institute**

The Space Science Institute (SSI) of Boulder, Colorado announces the appointment of Dr. Carolyn Porco, the leader of the Imaging Science team for the Saturn-bound Cassini spacecraft and an Adjunct Professor at both the University of Colorado and the University of Arizona, to its senior research and management staff. Her move to SSI follows a distinguished 18-year research and teaching career at the University of Arizona in Tucson, and a two-year stint at the Southwest Research Institute, also in Boulder. Porco directs the Cassini Imaging Central Laboratory for Operations (CICLOPS), the hub of Cassini Imaging Science team activities. CICLOPS, together with SSI, has relocated to larger facilities in the Tierra Centre at 4750 Walnut Street. The new, larger accommodations will help meet a growing demand for more office and laboratory space to house CICLOPS operations, which will include the processing and dissemination of Cassini images and movies to the public.

‘It is unusual to find a non-academic organization that encourages the diversity of activities, creative freedom, and autonomy that one finds in a University environment. But that’s what SSI is all about’, Porco says. “I feel the environment here suits my goals nicely.”

The Space Science Institute is a non-profit organization of scientists and educators with a unique mission to integrate research in the areas of astrophysics, planetary science and the earth sciences with education and public outreach. In addition to NASA- and NSF-supported space science research programs, and now the Cassini Imaging Team flight operations, its activities include the development of science exhibitions for museums, professional development for teachers, educational workshops for scientists, and the creation of curricula, classroom activities, and online interactive educational resources associated with the national education standards in science, math, and technology.

Porco has made it her own mission to produce, and release for public consumption, images which are scientifically accurate, artfully presented, and as close to true color as resources will allow. ‘I want the world to see and enjoy what the planetary bodies and phenomena imaged by Cassini would look like if one were there, going along for the ride.’ Recently, the International Association of Astronomical Artists commented on the efforts of Porco and her team to produce accurate and aesthetically pleasing images from the 2000/2001 Cassini Jupiter flyby. ‘The images they have released demonstrate a rare sensitivity to not only scientific accuracy but also to artistic considerations in the presentation of the images,’ said Dirk Terrell, the IAAA’s vice-president and a scientist at the Southwest Research Institute.

"All of SSI is very excited about Dr. Carolyn Porco and her CICLOPS team joining the growing family of SSI researchers and educators," said Dr. Paul Dusenbery, Executive Director of the Institute. "Both CICLOPS and SSI share in the goal of developing an environment that fosters creativity. SSI is committed to sharing its many inspirational scientific research results with the public. The Cassini mission to Saturn is a great example of a research program that will grab the public's attention and imagination."

The Cassini spacecraft, launched in October 1997, will be placed in orbit around Saturn on July 1, 2004 and begin a six-year mission to observe the planet and its collection of rings and icy moons, including its largest moon Titan. Titan, an organic-rich body the size of Mercury, is expected to yield information relevant to the study of the genesis of life on Earth. Cassini is a cooperative mission of NASA, the European Space Agency and the Italian Space Agency.

Porco earned a doctorate in planetary sciences from the California Institute of Technology in 1983. She played a prominent role in the Voyager mission to the outer planets in the 1980s, and is a lead imaging scientist on NASA's New Horizons mission, expected to launch to Pluto in early 2006. She has been an active participant in guiding the American space program and recently served, at the request of the National Academy of Sciences and NASA, as the Vice Chair of the Steering Group for the Solar System Decadal Survey, a committee tasked with evaluating the state and future of NASA's planetary program of robotic exploration. In 1998, Asteroid 7231 Porco was named in honor of her status as a "leader in spacecraft exploration of the outer solar system."

Porco is a frequent commentator on planetary science for television, radio, and the popular science journals. This past year, she served as scientific advisor and director for some of the animations for the A&E special on the 25th anniversary of the Voyager mission, 'Cosmic Journey', produced by Cosmos Studios.

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