



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Elizabeth Page

(512) 936-4607

Elizabeth.Page@TheStoryOfTexas.com

The 2.1-meter (82-inch) Otto Struve Telescope at the University of Texas McDonald Observatory.

Marty Harris/McDonald Observatory.

McDonald Observatory celebrates 75 years of stargazing with new exhibit at the Bullock

Artifacts and photos document stellar history of iconic Texas institution

APRIL 18, 2014 (AUSTIN, TX) – The Bullock Texas State History Museum and the McDonald Observatory have partnered to produce a new exhibit, *The McDonald Observatory: 75 Years of Stargazing*, that opens May 1 in the museum's third-floor Rotunda Gallery, which is free to the public. This anniversary exhibit will feature large format graphics of the night sky as seen from one of the best stargazing places on Earth, various pieces of astronomical equipment, and a 1,000 pound model of a telescope, among other artifacts and photos.

The University of Texas at Austin's McDonald Observatory was dedicated May 5, 1939 and turns 75 this year. The observatory is one of the world's leading centers for astronomical research, teaching, and public education and outreach. Its facilities are located atop Mount Locke and Mount Fowlkes in the Davis Mountains of West Texas, which offer some of the darkest night skies in the continental United States. The Observatory's administrative offices are on the UT-Austin campus.

Of particular interest in the show is a 1,000 pound model of the Otto Struve telescope currently at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland. The telescope model and other equipment from the observatory will be featured alongside stories of important discoveries, astronomers, and the unique nature of the McDonald Observatory community.

-more-

The exhibit is part of a series of events and celebrations around the state that begin in September, 2013 and will continue through August 2014. This exhibition is made possible by Sophia and G. W. Brock and Michelle K. Brock. For more information, visit mcdonaldobservatory.org/anniversary.

The Bullock Texas State History Museum in downtown Austin tells the unfolding story of the history, culture and people of Texas. The museum and IMAX theatre are located at 1800 N. Congress Avenue. For hours, directions, ticket prices and more, visit TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-4649.

Key Exhibit Artifact List

Carnegie Image Tube - This tube was used to explore whether water could be found on Mars. (McDonald Observatory)

Time Magazine Article - Article from the 1940's showcasing the first published color images of Mars made by Dr. G. P. Kuiper with the 82" Otto Struve telescope. (McDonald Observatory)

Mirror from Hobby-Eberly telescope - A mirror from the in-demand HET telescope. The HET has been used to discover planets orbiting other stars, study black holes in distant galaxies, and soon will be used for a study of the mysterious 'dark energy' causing the expansion of the universe to speed up over time. (McDonald Observatory)

Model of 82" Telescope - A 1,000-pound model of the Otto Struve telescope. Construction of McDonald Observatory's first large telescope was completed in 1938 at the Warner and Swasey Company in Cleveland, Ohio. The telescope was installed in its dome on Mount Locke, 18 miles northwest of Fort Davis, Texas, on land donated by Mrs. Violet McIvor for the observatory. (Western Reserve Historical Society)

###

About the Bullock Museum

The Bullock Texas State History Museum in downtown Austin tells the unfolding story of the history, culture and people of Texas. One of the most popular attractions in Central Texas, the Museum has welcomed more than 6 million visitors since it opened in 2001. The Museum and IMAX Theatre are located at 1800 N. Congress Ave., between the State Capital complex and the University of Texas campus. For more, visit www.TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746.