

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Date: September 10, 2007

Contact: Carolyn Belardo 215 299-1043, belardo@ansp.org

To download this release: www.ansp.org/media

INNOVATIVE SCIENCE PROGRAM FOR GIRLS MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY WITH FREE PUBLIC TALK OCT. 9

PHILADELPHIA — Tamar Coles was fascinated with science as a little girl, but it was The Academy of Natural Sciences that inspired her to turn her curiosity into a career.

While a freshman at George Washington Carver High School for Engineering and Science in Philadelphia, Coles' biology teacher recognized her passion for science and nominated her to participate in the Academy's innovative Women In Natural Sciences program for low-income, single-parent public school girls. Now 29 years old, Coles is a chemist with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and WINS is celebrating its 25th year as a trend-setting science-enrichment program.

"WINS made such a difference in my life," said Coles. "I learned so much about our land and how to take care of it. It really gave me a firm foundation."

Coles is among the WINS graduates invited to attend a panel discussion at 7 p.m. on **Tuesday, Oct. 9**, titled "25 Years of Women in Science: Putting the Gender Gap Under the Microscope," featuring panelists Kathryn Fuller, Chair of the Board for the Ford Foundation and former President and CEO of the World Wildlife Fund, Carol Collier, Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission, Dr. Kathryn Clark, former Chief Scientist for the International Space Station Program, and WINS Director Najwa Smith. The event is free and open to the public. To reserve a seat, contact Roland Wall, rwall@ansp.org, 215 299-1108.

In 1982 the Academy, in conjunction with the School District of Philadelphia, implemented WINS (http://www.ansp.org/education/special_programs/wins.php) as a unique effort to address the national problem of the lack of women working in the sciences. Since then, more than 600 high school girls have benefited from hands-on science classes based on the research of Academy scientists, scientific literacy and skill-building activities, and other opportunities for academic achievement and personal growth. Many students have moved on to pursue science degrees and jobs in the field, according to Smith.

-more-

“The question in the ‘80s was whether women had the access to move into fields of science. Now we know women are going into science fields in huge numbers. But are they enjoying the same levels of achievement in terms of salary and job title?” posed Smith.

Not according to a study published this year by the national Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (<http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309100429>) that said women make up an increasing proportion of science and engineering majors at colleges and universities, but only a small portion of them go on to faculty positions at research universities, where they are paid less than their male colleagues.

With WINS, the Academy is hoping to even out the playing fields of science.

This summer, a fresh crop of 32 enthusiastic teens spent three days each week exploring the Academy and the ecological principles at work in their daily lives. This fall, they will continue to meet every Wednesday after school (plus some Saturdays) for hands-on classes, behind-the-scenes tours of the research collections and labs with Academy scientists, plus field trips to zoos and even a wolf preserve. Smith also will coach older students in resume writing, interviewing and expose them to science career opportunities. For most of the girls WINS is their very first opportunity to see and experience what it could be like to be a scientist when they grow up.

“25 Years of Women in Science: Putting the Gender Gap Under the Microscope” is presented by the Academy’s Town Square series, which brings together experts, stakeholders and the public to promote learning dialogue and thoughtful exchanges on important issues related to science, sustainability and the environment.

#

The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3-12, seniors, college students with I.D. and military personnel, and free for children under 3. There is an additional \$2 fee for Butterflies!

The Academy of Natural Sciences is Philadelphia's natural history museum and a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.