



## Dennis Schatz Honored with Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Dennis Schatz, vice president for education at the Pacific Science Center in Seattle, Washington, was presented today with the *ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution*, the Association's highest honor. Mr. Schatz accepted the award from Wit Ostrenko, ASTC president and director of the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Tampa, Florida, at the opening session of the 2006 ASTC Annual Conference. The Annual Conference, the world's largest gathering of science center professionals, is being hosted this year by the Louisville Science Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

The *ASTC Fellow Award* is bestowed upon individuals who merit special recognition for their significant contributions to the advancement of public understanding and appreciation of science and technology or of ASTC itself. First presented in 1974, it was most recently awarded in 2005 to Sheila Grinell, former founding President and CEO of the Arizona Science Center in Phoenix, Arizona and interim CEO, at that time, of the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, California, was honored. Today marks the first time since the award's inception that a science center professional other than the director of a museum or a U.S. congressional supporter of science centers has been honored. The *ASTC Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution* was sponsored by Sodexo.

The text of Mr. Schatz's award reads: "The Board of Directors and Members of the Association of Science-Technology Centers hereby award a *Fellow Membership for Outstanding Contribution* to Dennis Schatz for devoting more than thirty years to promoting informal science learning, inspiring science center visitors and educators, and helping colleagues achieve excellence. Dennis's creativity, commitment to sharing and partnering, and truly 'stellar' leadership have quietly, yet deeply, touched us all."

Dennis Schatz began his career in the science center field at the Lawrence Hall of Science, Berkeley, California, in the early 1970s, joining the staff of then director Alan Friedman—later to be an ASTC Fellow Award honoree himself. There, he helped to establish the first "Participatory Oriented Planetarium" and used a National Science Foundation grant to produce a guide and run related workshops around the United States.

Mr. Schatz was recruited by the Pacific Science Center nearly three decades ago to lead their new Regional Astronomy Education Laboratory and interactive planetarium. During his 29 years in Seattle, he has continued his efforts to make science real, fun, and engaging.

Mr. Schatz's passion for the importance of science education drove him to help create "Science on Wheels," one of the most extensive school outreach programs in the country, with eight, 15-passenger vans delivering exciting, interactive science curriculum to more than 250,000 elementary and middle school students in every county in Washington state.

Mr. Schatz also led the development of the "Science Carnival," a traveling science center under tents. By demonstrating to communities what a science center could be, providing a "starter set" of exhibits, and even offering staff training, the project became a catalyst for developing new and emerging science centers.

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In 1999, Mr. Schatz initiated the Washington State LASER (Leadership and Assistance for Science Education Reform) program, which he now co-directs. The LASER program's mission is to assist school districts with implementing an ongoing, inquiry-based science program that is based on a research-based model of systemic reform and aligned with the Washington State Science Grade Level Expectations. It is one of the most extensive statewide science education reform efforts and the only one with leadership based in a science center.

Mr. Schatz has also written 18 children's books, including the award-winning *Uncover a T. Rex*, which has sold more than 600,000 copies and is available in 12 languages. His *Totally* series of books has sold more than 500,000 copies.

The Association of Science-Technology Centers is an organization of more than 430 science centers and museums in 42 countries dedicated to furthering the public understanding of science among increasingly diverse audiences. ASTC encourages excellence and innovation in informal science learning by serving and linking its members worldwide and advancing their common goals. ASTC provides professional development for the science center field, promotes best practices, supports effective communication, strengthens the position of science centers within the community at large, and fosters the creation of successful partnerships and collaborations. Visit [www.astc.org](http://www.astc.org) to learn more about ASTC and the *Fellow Award for Outstanding Contribution*, and to find a science center near you.

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