



Derrick H. Pitts
Senior Scientist, Chief Astronomer,
Planetarium Director, Exhibit Developer
Franklin Institute Science Museum

Derrick Pitts has been associated with the Franklin Institute Science Museum since 1978, designing and presenting many of the museum's public programs and exhibits. Pitts was the original director of the Tuttleman OMNIMAX Theater, museum vice-president and many other valued positions. He has been Chief Astronomer and Director of the Fels Planetarium since 1990, having written and produced more than two-dozen planetarium programs. He served as the US National Spokesperson for the IAU 'International Year of Astronomy 2009' and currently is a NASA Solar System Ambassador.

He has written numerous astronomy columns for newspapers and national magazines. He appears regularly on all the major television networks as a science content expert and, for nearly two decades, has hosted award-winning astronomy radio programs for Philadelphia's WHYY 91 FM and for WXPB's 'Kids' Corner' radio program. Pitts is an 'on-air' content contributor for Current TV's *Countdown with Keith Olberman*, for CNN International and for MSNBC. He recently had stunning appearances on the Comedy Channel's "Colbert Report" and "The Late, Late Show with Craig Ferguson" on CBS. Pitts recently met President Barack Obama and his family when he was invited to the White House to participate in the first-ever White House Star Party.

Pitts is nationally known as an excellent 'teacher'. His presentations are stimulating, humorous, intellectually challenging, compelling and at the same time accessible to the broadest audiences. He puts his emphasis on making sure that everyone can come to appreciate the universe as he sees it – not a watered-down sketch of the universe, but a rich, deep, complex version with human connections that everyone can understand at some level.

Among his many awards are the Mayor's Liberty Bell, the St. Lawrence University Distinguished Alumni Award, the G. W. Carver Medal, Please Touch Museum's "Great Friend To Kids" Award, induction into the Germantown Historical Society Hall of Fame, selection as one of the "50 Most Important Blacks in Research Science" by Science Spectrum Magazine in 2004, the 2010 inaugural recipient of the David Rittenhouse Award, and in 2011, an honorary Doctor of Science degree from LaSalle University.

Pitts currently serves as the Academic Affairs committee chair on the Board of Trustees for his alma mater St. Lawrence University, is a member of the Board of Trustees at Widener University and is currently president of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of Tuskegee Airmen Inc. He and his wife Linda reside in the Wynnefield Heights section of Philadelphia.