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MAY 12, 2015

***Contact details appear below***

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LOWELL OBSERVATORY TO HOST PLUTO AND BEYOND GALA ON JUNE 13

Flagstaff, Az- Lowell Observatory will host its fourth annual fundraising gala, Pluto and Beyond, on June 13. Sponsored by APS, it will take place on the campus of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and feature experts sharing the latest Pluto news, auctions showcasing a variety of travel packages and astronomy-themed collectibles, and live music. Proceeds support Lowell’s mission of astronomical research and outreach.

Lisa Actor, Lowell’s Deputy Director for Development, said, “This will be an exciting event in this year when we’re celebrating the 85th anniversary of the discovery of Pluto at Lowell Observatory! I’m anxious to meet and personally thank the many Flagstaff area supporters of the observatory.”

Pluto and Beyond kicks off with the Kuiper VIP Reception at 5:30 p.m. Presented by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona, this champagne and cocktail gathering will meet in the 1899 Bar & Grill.

The main event happens in the High Country Conference Center, with doors opening at 6 p.m. and a sit-down dinner served at 7:30 p.m. Afterward, experts from Lowell Observatory will discuss the astronomy news story of the year—the New Horizons spacecraft’s July approach to Pluto after an incredible nine-year journey. This program will start with a look at Clyde
Tombaugh’s improbable discovery of this icy world at Lowell in 1930 and continue with the latest news from New Horizons as it prepares to capture the first-ever close-up images of Pluto’s surface. The program will culminate with a discussion of the significance of New Horizons and how it sets the stage for future exploration of Pluto and the outer solar system.

Throughout the evening, a non-hosted bar will remain open and the local band Mogollon will provide lively music. Guests may also participate in a raffle and both live and silent auctions. Some of the featured items up for bid will be weekend stays in Laughlin and Phoenix, a star party and overnight stay at the Observatory’s Giovale-Millis Lodge near Lowell Observatory’s Discovery Channel Telescope, space-themed jewelry, framed astronomical images, a dark-skies-themed wine set by local artist George Averbeck, and rare publications and artifacts.

Tickets to the main event cost $125 each. VIP tickets go for $1300 and include two tickets to the VIP reception, two dinner tickets with preferred seating, and a one-year membership to Lowell at the Associate level.

Lowell’s Annual Gifts Manager Mica Gratton expects 400 guests for this year’s event. She said, “Through the support of the community and all of our donors, we have been able to fulfill Percival Lowell’s mission for the past 121 years. This event is one of Lowell Observatory’s premiere fundraisers and the money raised will help us continue to carry out cutting-edge research and quality education.”

Tickets are available at http://lowell.edu/2015-pluto-and-beyond-gala/ or by contacting Hannah Graves at hgraves@lowell.edu or (928) 255-5059.

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*About Lowell Observatory*

Lowell Observatory is a private, non-profit research institution founded in 1894 by Percival Lowell. The Observatory has been the site of many important discoveries including the detection of the large recessional velocities (redshift) of galaxies by Vesto Slipher in 1912-1914
(a result that led ultimately to the realization the universe is expanding), and the discovery of Pluto by Clyde Tombaugh in 1930. Today, Lowell's 14 astronomers use ground-based telescopes around the world, telescopes in space, and NASA planetary spacecraft to conduct research in diverse areas of astronomy and planetary science. The Observatory welcomes about 80,000 visitors each year to its Mars Hill campus in Flagstaff, Arizona for a variety of tours, telescope viewing, and special programs. Lowell Observatory currently operates four research telescopes at its Anderson Mesa dark sky site east of Flagstaff and the 4.3-meter Discovery Channel Telescope near Happy Jack, Arizona.