

# **From Astrolabes to Space Suits: Expanding the Adler Planetarium Collections Into Contemporary Science and Technology**

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The core collection of the Adler Planetarium, known as the Mensing Collection, was acquired shortly before the planetarium opened to the public in 1930, as a way of conferring a seal of cultural credibility on the new institution and affirming it as a proper science museum. The Mensing Collection is mostly formed by medieval and early modern scientific instruments, a direction which, to a significant extent, was maintained throughout the subsequent development of the Adler's collections. The revamping of the Adler as a modern science center over the last decades, with a growing focus on space science and exploration, has called for an expansion of its collections into modern and contemporary science and technology. This has brought about new challenges, adding to those of caring for, and presenting a historical collection in a planetarium/science center setting. In this talk, I will discuss some changes in the Adler's collections policies and examples of curatorial options that illustrate how the Planetarium is addressing those challenges, while undergoing a process of rebranding and developing a masterplan for the renewal of its public spaces and programs.