

# SANDRA F. PRITCHARD MATHER PLANETARIUM NEWS

## 2024-2025 Season

*The Mather Planetarium at West Chester University*



Greetings! We hope your summer has been enjoyable. The fall semester is fast approaching, and our doors will soon be open again. There are some changes coming to the Mather Planetarium which you can read about below. Not to worry - you can still depend on us for entertaining and educational programs. There will just be some new faces to greet you. As always, we look forward to seeing you under the dome.

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On-line Ticket Sales  
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**\*\* Follow us on Facebook \*\***

*"Certainly, the history of astronomy shows that every time we thought we were special, we were wrong."*

*- Seth Shostak*

## Live Show Dates for Fall 2024

**September 27, 2024**

**October 18, 2024**

**November 15, 2024**

**December 13, 2024**

The topics for these live shows, as well as dates for the spring live shows, will be posted on our website in the coming weeks.

Movie show dates will also be added to the schedule soon.

Please check our website for updates and details about the different types of shows.

# The Mather Planetarium – Past and Future

## The Past

I have some big news to share. This will be my last newsletter as the Director of the Mather Planetarium. As of this month, I am retiring from West Chester University.

It was almost 20 years ago that I came to WCU from Arizona as a professor of astronomy. Part of the job was to run the planetarium, which at that time had no name and consisted of a big mechanical projector that looked, appropriately, like something out of a sci-fi movie. When I started, the only programs we had were two morning shows a week for school groups. After a year of hosting lots of elementary classes, I experimented with monthly Friday evening shows, opening our doors to the general public.

Then came the renovation and finally a real name over the door! The ancient ant-shaped projector was replaced with a sleek digital system, a new nanoseam dome was put in place, and comfy chairs installed, all made possible by the generosity of Dr. Sandie Mather. Our public shows now included full-dome movies; what a treat!

We also added special shows and events – poetry and music under the stars, celebrating the Apollo 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, solar eclipse viewings, and the James Webb Space Telescope launch. With every addition to the programming, people responded positively. Seats were filled, tickets sold out, smiles of thanks received.

Being the director of the Mather Planetarium has been one of the best parts of my job at WCU. If I've done a lot in my role here it's because people like you continue to show up and make it all worthwhile. Thank you for letting me share my love of astronomy with you and your families.

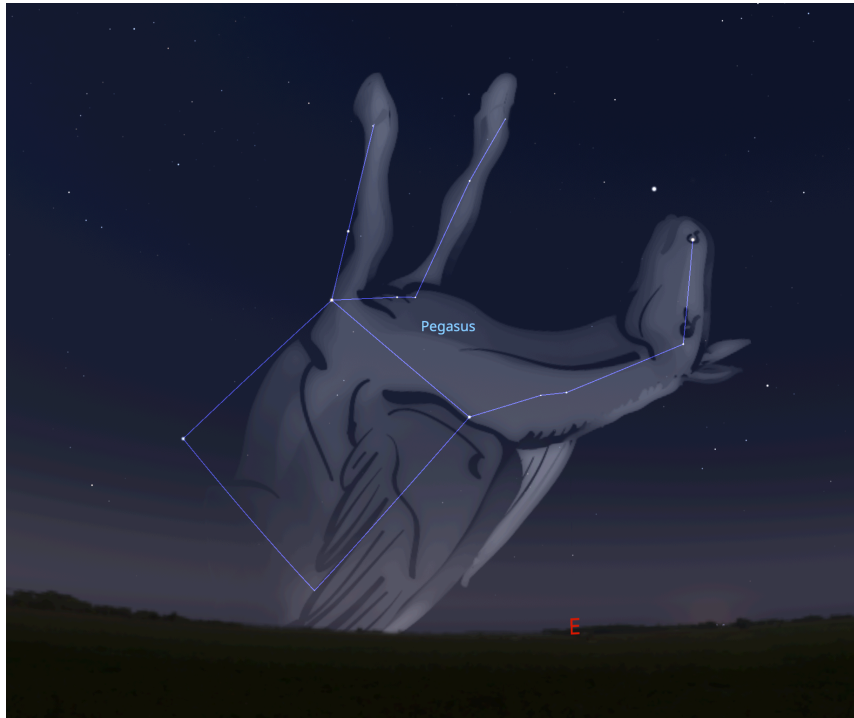
Retirement will be taking me back to Arizona. Here's a photo of the sky from our house there (try not to be jealous). Keep looking up!



## The Future

As I step down, I'm pleased to be leaving the Mather Planetarium in the very capable hands of Ms. Lily Pedlow. Lily is a West Chester alumna, having earned a B.S. from the Department of Physics and a minor in astronomy. She then went on to complete her master's degree at the University of Delaware. While at WCU, Lily worked as a student assistant in the planetarium, doing night sky tours and running movie shows. She loves astronomy and is excited to share that passion with WCU students and planetarium visitors. I hope you'll come and visit her soon!





## Looking Up: Pegasus

Pegasus is a favorite character in Greek mythology. I mean, who wouldn't want a flying horse? The famous steed has an impressive and varied story.

Pegasus came to be when Perseus cut off the head of Medusa, the Gorgon with hair made of snakes. When Medusa was beheaded, two creatures sprang from her body – Pegasus and Chrysaor, a man with a golden sword. It is said that Poseidon, the god of the seas, was their father.

Perseus took Medusa's head as it had the power to turn anyone who looked at it into stone. Many images of Perseus show him on the back of Pegasus, holding the head of snakes. Perseus and Pegasus then flew off to rescue Andromeda from Cetus, the sea monster.

Some myths state that everywhere the horse's hooves struck the ground, a spring would well up. One such spring is the Hippocrene on Mount Helicon – translated as "horse spring". In another story, Pegasus was captured while drinking at a spring.

The Greek hero Bellerophon is said to have used a charmed bridle given to him by Athena to grab Pegasus. Bellerophon was then able to ride Pegasus, allowing Bellerophon to defeat the monster Chimera. There were more adventures for the pair but when Bellerophon attempted to ride Pegasus to Mount Olympus, home of the Gods, he fell from the horse's back and died.

While he's in many stories with different protagonists, Pegasus doesn't really belong to any one person. He was even called upon by Zeus to carry his thunderbolts. For years of faithful service, Zeus honored the steed by placing the constellation of Pegasus in the sky.

If you're a Disney fan, you might associate the hero Hercules with Pegasus. Unfortunately, these two Greek legends don't actually go together, although it makes for a cute kid's movie.