Bollinger, Faculty Set Asia Tour to Celebrate Anniversary

BY KATHERINE MOORE

In the early 1900s, around the time Daniel Chester French’s Alma Mater took her formal seat in front of Low Library, a $12,000 check landed on the desk of then Columbia President Seth Low. As was the custom in those days, a hand-written note accompanied the gift. It came from Dean Lung, who signed the letter simply “a Chinese person.” Lung’s generous contribution sparked an endowment for Chinese studies at the University and began Columbia’s hundred-year relationship with the people and countries of Asia. On April 3, Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger will travel to East Asia to herald long-time collaborative agreements with educational institutions in the region. Senior Columbia faculty, including SIPA’s Weatherhead East Asian Institute, have been a leader in Asian studies in the world’s understanding of modern world. Bollinger expects to meet with senior government officials such as Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, as well as ministers of education and foreign affairs in Japan, China, Taiwan and South Korea, and to attend Columbia’s 250th Anniversary gala events in each city. He also will address the public at Peking University in Beijing, Waseda University in Tokyo and Yonsei University in Seoul, discussing globalization in higher education and Columbia’s plans to reach new audiences overseas, most especially in Asia. Columbia and its many schools and affiliates have been actively engaged in East Asia and Asian studies for more than a century. In 1902, a year after Dean Lung’s gift, Columbia received a donation of books from the government of imperial China. Over time the University built one of the largest East Asian libraries outside of Asia. The library now has 750,000 volumes of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tibetan and Western-language Asian materials and more than 5,500 periodical titles. Well before the World Wars spurred American interest in Asia, Columbia was one of the first universities in the United States to introduce Asian languages, history, religion and politics into its undergraduate curriculum. In 1921, the University’s College of Physicians and Surgeons helped establish Peking Union Medical College, the first Western medical institution in China. SIPA’s Weatherhead East Asian Institute has contributed significantly to the Western world’s understanding of modern (Continued on Page 12)

The Telescope as Time Machine: Columbians Explore the Hubble Ultra Deep Field

BY ALISSA KAPLAN MICHAELS

A long-awaited FedEx box arrived on a March morning at the American Museum of Natural History, much to the delight of the team of Columbia astronomers anxious to analyze its contents. Inside the box from the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore were the latest images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope of what is known as the Ultra Deep Field (UDF). The composite image contains no fewer than 10,000 galaxies, revealing some of the farthest and youngest galaxies ever seen. The dazzling and intricately detailed photographs—taken over a six-month period—“are the best images of the sky we will have for probably the next 10 years,” said Arlin Crotts, a Columbia University astronomy professor. Crotts heads a team of Columbia faculty, postdoctoral and graduate students, who, alongside astronomers from the museum and Stony Brook University, are in an “internal race” with other experts to uncover new results from the latest images. The participating scientists in New York worked in full public view March 9-14, at the museum’s Rose Center for Earth and Space, and reported their discoveries to the crowd every few hours. One of the Columbia postdoctoral students at the museum, Patrick Cseresnjes, said, “We’re trying to get something as fast as possible. Until today, no one saw these images.” Other members of the Columbia team include research staff assistants Alex Bergsier and Sarah Tuttle and graduate students Eilat Glikman, Benjamin Johnson and Stephen Muchovej. Against the backdrop of the colorful composite image, Crotts and the other scientists relayed its significance to the audience, who included several dozen high school students. Over the week, Crotts and his team spoke to thousands of onlookers. “This is the most detailed account of how light in the universe was produced over most of its history,” Crotts said, adding that the universe is approximately 13 billion years old. Each team is concentrating on a specific aspect of the new UDF image. The Columbia team’s focus is finding objects in (Continued on Page 12)