

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Date: September 4, 2008

Contact: Carolyn Belardo 215 299-1043, belardo@ansp.org

To download this release and images: www.ansp.org/media

FALL ACADEMY BOOK-TALK SERIES FEATURES FOSSIL-HUNTING ADVENTURES, THEN AND NOW *SEPTEMBER 25 and OCTOBER 22*

PHILADELPHIA—Fossil-hunting has captured the imagination since the mid-1700s and continues to this day with new discoveries more amazing than the next. This fall, The Academy of Natural Sciences kicks off its fall book series by welcoming the authors of two new books on the subject for free, illustrated talks and book-signings.

The talks are an enlightening prelude to the Nov. 22 opening of the Academy's new exhibit on the ultimate fossil find of the 19th century, "*Hadrosaurus foulkii*: The Dinosaur That Changed the World."

Thursday, Sept. 25, at 6:30 p.m., Dr. Keith Thomson, professor emeritus of natural history at University of Oxford and former Academy president, will recount highlights from his book, "The Legacy of the Mastodon: The Golden Age of Fossils in America." "The Legacy of the Mastodon" tells the story of a great American scientific adventure starring giant extinct mammals and dinosaurs. Prominent Philadelphians like Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Leidy, Edward Drinker Cope, together with the Academy and the American Philosophical Society play the central roles.

Thomson has written more than 200 scientific papers and 12 books. He has served as director of the University Museum at Oxford, director of the Peabody Museum of Natural History, and dean of Yale University's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Following his talk, which is co-sponsored by Joseph Fox Bookshop of Philadelphia, Thomson will sign copies of his book, which will be available for purchase that night. In addition, related fossils from the Academy's collection will be on display. Admission is free and registration is not required.

Wednesday, October 22, at 6:30 p.m., Kirk Johnson and Ray Troll will recount amusing and delightful anecdotes from their latest book, "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway: An Epoch Tale of a Scientist and an Artist on the Ultimate 5,000-Mile Paleo Road Trip." "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway" follows the zany travels of a paleontologist (Johnson) and an artist (Troll) as they drive across the American West in search of fossils, encountering everything from suburban *T. rexes* to killer Eocene pigs to ancient fossilized forests. Mostly they traveled to remote places, where they discovered small-town museums packed with paleontological treasures, rock quarries that yielded hundreds of fossilized bones, and the remains of ancient seashores tracked with dinosaur footprints.

-more-

Johnson is vice president and chief curator of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. His research focuses on fossil plants, the environmental effects of the dinosaur-smiting asteroid, and the birth and death of biomes. He is the author of "Prehistoric Journey: A History of Life on Earth" and "Ancient Denvers: Scenes from the Past 300 Million Years of the Colorado Front Range."

Troll, who lives in Alaska, has created artwork for conservation organizations including the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. His unique blend of art and science culminated in his traveling exhibit, "Dancing to the Fossil Record," which was shown at the Academy several years ago. Academy visitors also saw his artwork last year in the exhibit "Amazon Voyage: Vicious Fishes and Other Riches." He has illustrated several children's books including "Sharkabet: A Sea of Sharks from A to Z" and "Shocking Fish Tales."

Following the talk, Johnson and Troll will sign copies of their book, which will be available for purchase that night in the Academy Shop. Admission is free. To register, log on to www.ansp.org/activities/adult_programs.php.

###

The Academy is located at 1900 Benjamin Franklin Parkway and is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and weekends until 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for children ages 3–12, seniors, college students and military personnel, and free for Members and children under 3. There is an additional \$2 entry fee for "Butterflies!"

Founded in 1812, The Academy of Natural Sciences is the oldest natural science research institution and museum in the Americas and is a world leader in biodiversity and environmental research. The mission of the Academy is the encouragement and cultivation of the sciences.