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NASA selects UT Arlington to display artifact; funds new shows

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ARLINGTON - The Planetarium at UT Arlington has been selected as a recipient in the new artifact loan program at NASA. The planetarium has received a tire from the main landing gear of the Space Shuttle Columbia, which was destroyed over East Texas on Feb. 1, 2003, on its landing descent to Kennedy Space Center after the completion of a microgravity research mission. University of Texas at Arlington alumnae Kalpana Chawla, for whom the university's newest residence hall is named, was one of the crew members tragically killed in the accident.

The loan term is for three years. The tire is displayed in the atrium area near the planetarium in the Chemistry and Physics Building, 700 Planetarium Place. NASA is also providing information regarding the mission from which that tire was used.

NASA supported the University in the development of its 2007 original show, "Cosmic CSI." Another two NASA-funded shows, "SOFIA – the Unseen Universe," and "Magnificent Sun," are under development, funded by grants awarded to Dr. Manfred Cuntz, associate professor of physics and the co-director of astronomy.

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