

**Profile of  
Jean Creighton  
Director of Manfred Olson Planetarium, UW-Milwaukee  
2017 Regents Academic Staff Excellence Award Individual Recipient**

**Highlights from nomination materials:**

- Joined the Department of Physics at UW-Milwaukee in 1999; hired as the director of the Manfred Olson Planetarium in 2007.
- During her tenure, attendance at planetarium programs has doubled; the planetarium currently attracts more than 10,000 visitors to 300 shows each year.
- Has created innovative astronomy programs for K-12 students and the public, including a summer astronomy course for the College for Kids and Teens.
- Has helped create collaborative courses for UW-Milwaukee students, including an interdisciplinary course between the theater and physics departments that combines storytelling and astronomy to enhance students' understanding of the universe.
- Has mentored more than 70 students through internships, master's projects, and student employment.
- Has maintained an active research and outreach program, including mentoring several teachers while serving as co-principal investigator on a National Science Foundation grant.
- In 2014, selected by NASA as one of 24 Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors on the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA), the largest moving astronomical observatory; she presented her experience to students and the public through a TEDx talk, "Musings from the Stratosphere," helping to inspire young people to take interest in the sciences.
- Has served on the UWM Communications Subcommittee since 2008 (chair from 2010-2014), as well as various committees within the Department of Physics.
- Presenter at Great Lakes Planetarium Association conferences; in 2012, received the association's honorary Fellow award in recognition of commitment to science education and research in innovative fields.

**In Jean Creighton's own words:**

- "I love sharing the stars with K-12 students and igniting their curiosity about space. In the past 10 years, I have had more than 45,000 K-12 students attend the planetarium's astronomy programs, approximately one-third of whom were students from Milwaukee Public Schools. I share my excitement and knowledge with these students and have an opportunity to answer their questions about space at a level they can understand but that also challenges them....I am eager to continue pursuing my dream of enabling more and more people to become enthralled by the beauty of the night sky and awed by the workings of our universe."

**In the words of colleagues:**

- "In her activities, Dr. Creighton has been successful in bridging academic silos – involving business, creative writing, architecture, and arts students in projects related to the planetarium. Dr. Creighton leads the UWM Planetarium with a style that is personable, and she explains complex matters in astronomy in an easily understandable way."  
—*Johannes Britz, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, UW-Milwaukee*
- "Her efforts have moved the Manfred Olson Planetarium from an underutilized campus resource to a hub of activity that touches people across the campus, the city, and the region."  
—*Patrick R. Brady, Professor of Physics, UW-Milwaukee*