



POSITION: Director of the McNair-Davis Planetarium

REPORTS TO: Laurie Hearin McRee Director of the Mississippi Museum of Art

STATUS: Full-time

About this Opportunity

This is an exciting opportunity for a thoughtful, collaborative, community-focused and strong leader to build and train an innovative team of Planetarium staff in partnership with the Mississippi Museum of Art. The Planetarium Director will be instrumental in successfully re-opening the newly renovated three-story McNair-Davis Planetarium which includes a multi-purpose room for educational and programming opportunities, a space station, and an auditorium that accommodates 180 seats for dome shows. Alongside the Friends of the Planetarium Board, the Planetarium Director will have the opportunity to create a mission, vision, and strategic plan that launches the McNair-Davis Planetarium into a successful future.

The McNair-Davis Planetarium is a not-for-profit entity that is owned by the City of Jackson and is currently under the management of the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) for the next three years. Planetarium staff are part of the Mississippi Museum of Art's staffing structure, payroll system, benefits package, and employment policies. The Planetarium Director will report to MMA's Laurie Hearin McRee Director. They will work closely with MMA staff to plan the much-anticipated public re-opening and will continue to collaborate with MMA staff through programming and day-to-day operations to provide meaningful visitor experiences to both organizations and the 1.3 acres garden that naturally connects the buildings. MMA anticipates hiring the Planetarium Director for an expected start date of October 1, 2026.

Job Summary

The Planetarium Director is the "face" of the institution and the primary marketer for all the planetarium services provided to the greater Jackson, MS community. This person is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the McNair-Davis Planetarium. The Planetarium Director will oversee all aspects of the planetarium and exhibits, developing and implementing innovative educational programs, managing staff and volunteers, ensuring the financial sustainability of the programs, and fostering partnerships and relationships with area museums, convention centers, area schools and colleges, and astronomical and planetarium communities. They will report directly to the Mississippi Museum of Art's Laurie Hearin McRee Director and will work closely with the Friends of the Planetarium Board. The ideal candidate will possess a deep understanding of astronomy, planetarium operating systems, projection systems, coupled with a passion for science education and a proven ability to lead and inspire.

Essential Functions

Role #1: Leadership, Management, Accountability

- Lead a high performing team of staff and volunteers that communicate effectively, collaborate with each other and MMA staff, and provide a welcoming environment to all Planetarium visitors
- Guide team members' growth and development, set clear priorities, and foster an inclusive and positive work environment
- Inspire and mentor Planetarium staff and volunteers
- Represent the Planetarium to the community, donors, and stakeholders

Role #2: Program Development and Delivery

- Assist the Chief Educator and the Show Producer, as needed, in developing and implementing innovative and engaging programs for a wide range of audiences, including school groups, families, and the public.
- Assist the Chief Presenter in creating and delivering live presentations. Assist in developing and curating automated shows and help oversee the production of new content.
- Oversee the development of specialized programs for groups, entertainment shows, and planetarium/building rentals.
- Collaborate with the Chief Educator to develop and implement integrated educational programs and outreach initiatives.
- Stay current on the latest astronomical discoveries, technologies, and research findings.

Role #3: Astronomy Center Management

- Oversee the daily operations of the planetarium and the broader astronomy center, including scheduling, staffing, and facility upkeep.
- Manage the budget for both the planetarium, exhibit operations, and gift shop ensuring accounting/financial/fiduciary objectives are met.
- Supervise and mentor planetarium staff and volunteers, fostering a collaborative and supportive work environment.
- Ensure the safety and comfort of all visitors to both the planetarium and exhibits.
- Assist the Technical Director, as needed, in the maintenance and troubleshooting of all planetarium and exhibit equipment.

Role #4: Outreach and Community Engagement

- Develop and implement outreach programs to engage the local community and promote the astronomy center and planetarium.
- Collaborate with local schools, universities, and other community organizations to foster partnerships and promote astronomy education.
- Participate in community events and festivals, representing the institution and promoting its astronomy programs.
- Promote the planetarium and astronomy center through various channels, including social media, website, and local media.
- Actively promote the planetarium as an economic development tool, that brings people downtown where they can shop, eat, and make the most out of their planetarium visit experience.

Role #5: Grant Writing and Fundraising

- In conversation with MMA's advancement team, identify and pursue grant opportunities to support planetarium programs, exhibits, and astronomy center initiatives.
- Partner with MMA staff to develop and implement fundraising campaigns to generate revenue for planetarium operation and capital improvements.

Role #6: Research and Development

- Conduct research on best practices in informal planetarium education and operations, with a focus on incorporating the latest astronomical research and discoveries.
- Explore and implement new technologies and innovative programming techniques, including live presentations, and interactive exhibits.

Supervisory Responsibility

- Supervises full-time and part-time Planetarium staff and volunteers

Salary Range

\$60,000 - \$80,000

Competency

- A Bachelor's degree in Astronomy, Physics, Science Education or a closely related field.
- Strongly prefer 5 years of professional experience in planetarium operations and management.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- In-depth knowledge of astronomy, astrophysics, and space science.
- Strong understanding of planetarium technologies, including digital projectors, digital operating systems, lighting and audio systems, and special effects systems.
- Excellent communication, presentation, and interpersonal skills.
- Experience in developing and delivering engaging educational programs and entertainment productions for diverse audiences.
- Proficiency in using planetarium software and equipment.
- Experience in managing staff and volunteers.
- Experience in grant writing and fundraising.

Travel

Some local, state-wide, and national travel may be required.

Physical Demands and Work Environment

The typical workweek is 40 hours a week during normal business days from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. However, the Planetarium is open six to seven days a week. Full-time staff may be required to work some evenings and weekends to accommodate public programming, public operating hours, and supplement for part-time staff. All Planetarium staff are required to be cross trained to run the facility.

The physical demands and work environment characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Some duties may require long periods of movement as well as frequent reaching and kneeling, pushing, pulling, carrying, lifting and moving objects 5 pounds or more.
- Work may be performed both indoors and outdoors throughout the facility and grounds.

- A successful candidate must pass a background check secured by the Mississippi Museum of Art

About the McNair-Davis Planetarium

The McNair-Davis Planetarium is a not-for-profit entity that is owned by the City of Jackson and is currently under the management of the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) for the next three years. The building has recently undergone a significant \$23 million renovation, featuring a redesigned theater with a state of the art 360-degree projection and 52-feet in diameter dome, interactive and immersive exhibits, a multi-use event and educational space, and a welcoming three-story foyer that features a built-to-scale model solar system. The Planetarium is named for Dr. Ronald McNair, a filmmaker, physicist, and one of NASA's first African American astronauts, and former Jackson Mayor Russell C. Davis.

About the Mississippi Museum of Art

The Museum is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment. The Museum is a private not-for-profit and is not a department or agency of the state or federal government.

The Mississippi Museum of Art is more than an art museum in Jackson, Mississippi. It is a museum *of* Mississippi – a museum that connects Mississippians to our culture, our history, our communities, and to each other. It is a museum informed by the legacy of our past and emboldened by a vision of a future without division.

We believe it our responsibility to the community to explore and examine every facet of the Mississippi story. The Mississippi Museum of Art is committed to curating a shared space for every Mississippian – a brave space where we can all find wonder, peace and a voice.

We pride ourselves in being a visitor and community-focused art museum and garden in downtown Jackson, Mississippi. The Museum employs a collaborative staff that works to ensure the exhibitions, programs, operations, and community outreach fulfill the mission, vision, and core values of the institution. We are committed to building a culture of inclusivity that includes continued professional development opportunities at all levels of the Museum.

Mission

The Mississippi Museum of Art connects Mississippi to the world, and the power of art to the power of community.

Vision

Committed to honesty, equity, and inclusion, the Mississippi Museum of Art is a leader in engaging art, artists, and participants in the critical work of reckoning with the past, connecting with each other in the present, and envisioning a future without division.

Core Values

- Warm Welcome + Inclusion. The Museum will model open hospitality for all people and will demonstrate inclusiveness at all levels of its operations and programs.
- Honesty + Diversity. Honoring diverse viewpoints, histories, and lived experiences, the Museum will be a place for honest conversations that respect difference in the service of

increased understanding and empathy.

- Local Relevance + National Distinction. The Museum pursues deep investigations into Mississippi's cultural history and produces programs of high quality and relevance that attract new national partners seeking to explore the relationship between Mississippi and the world.
- Artworks + Artists. Museum programs will honor the primacy of artistic objects as sources of meaning and will include, when possible, meaningful opportunities for participants to have personal experiences with visual artists.
- Excellence + Equity. Museum programs, exhibitions, and collections will place artistic value as critical, while simultaneously dismantling traditional hierarchies of genre and style.
- Trust + Authority. The Museum values academic scholarship and accuracy; and, at the same time, it trusts the voices of people who have lived experiences that deepen the meaning of its exhibitions.

Employee Values

A successful member of the Museum's team will be mission-driven, welcoming, inclusive, respectful, empathetic, ambitious, will bring a level of excellence to their work, have a high respect for artists and artistic integrity, and will collaborate within their department and with other departments.

To apply for this position, please send your current CV and cover letter to careers@msmuseumart.org by September 21, 2026.