

CONTACT: Dorie Baker 203-432-8553 dorie.baker@yale.edu
For immediate release: November 23, 2011

“Journey of the Universe” Premieres on PBS in December

New Haven, Conn. – “Journey of the Universe,” a documentary exploring the human connection to Earth and the cosmos, which was produced by Yale historian of religions Mary Evelyn Tucker, will premiere on PBS stations nationwide beginning Dec. 3.

To check local listings and view the trailer, visit www.journeyoftheuniverse.org.

“Journey of the Universe” invites viewers to become travelers on a journey that explores the origins of the universe, the emergence of life, and the rise of humans, say the filmmakers. Filmed on location on the Greek island of Samos, the birthplace of the mathematician, philosopher and mystic Pythagoras, “Journey of the Universe” weaves together the findings of modern science with cultural traditions of the West, China, Africa, India, and indigenous peoples to explore cosmic evolution as a process of creativity, connection, and interdependence.

The film is narrated by evolutionary philosopher Brian Swimme, and was produced by Tucker and her husband, John Grim. Tucker and Grim teach in a joint master’s program in religion and ecology at the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies (FES) and Yale Divinity School, where they also direct the Forum on Religion and Ecology.

Peter Crane, dean of FES, said, “In the history of our school, the sweep of the film’s vision ranks with that of Aldo Leopold — thinking like a mountain meets thinking like an atom. The book and film offer a comprehensive framework to address the daunting ecological and social challenges of our times.”

Swimme and Tucker also wrote a companion book, published by Yale University Press, and produced an Educational Series that includes interviews with 20 scientists and environmentalists and curricular materials that further explore the unfolding universe story. The Educational Series is available on the “Journey of the Universe” website.

Thomas Lovejoy, a conservation biologist who holds a bachelor’s degree (1964) and doctorate (1971) from Yale and is the founder of the PBS Nature series, said the film’s stunning imagery fosters an understanding of our evolutionary origins and a sense of urgency in protecting the diversity of life and the environment on Earth. “This is a wonderful account of the history of the universe from the Big Bang through the present moment.”

“Journey of the Universe” is the result of the collective inspiration of a 30-year collaboration between Swimme, Tucker, Grim, and the late Thomas Berry, a historian of world religions and a leading environmental thinker. They were inspired by Berry’s article “The New Story,” which examined how the world’s religions explained the creation of the world and the scientific story of the universe’s emergence.

“Berry had a vision of the need for an integrating narrative of the development of the universe, Earth, and humans,” Tucker said. Grim added, “He was one of the first to suggest we need an epic story that would show people their profound connection to the Earth community.”

Derek Briggs, director of the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, said that through the diverse achievements of science, humans now know more than ever about the history of the universe and the unfolding of life on Earth. However, he added, society continues to grapple with the age-old questions of “What role do humans play in this 14-billion-year history of the universe?” And “How do we connect with the intricate web of life?” — questions, he notes, that “Journey of the Universe” begins to address.