



MARYLAND SCIENCE CENTER TO CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY ON JUNE 13

Before the National Aquarium. Before Harborplace. Before the Baltimore Convention Center and the Inner Harbor Renaissance.

There was the Maryland Science Center.

On June 13, 1976, the Maryland Science Center opened to the public as the fulfillment of the Maryland Academy of Science's mission to be "a focal point for scientific activities... to strengthen and extend its activities in public education and civic service."

That mission has been fulfilled for 50 years as more than 15 million visitors have enjoyed scores of hands-on exhibits, awe-inspiring shows in the St. John Properties IMAX Theater and original productions in the Harvey M. Meyerhoff Digital Planetarium, fun and educational programs in classrooms and throughout the exhibit halls, special events, overnight sleepovers, summer camps, interactive workshops, teacher education and intergenerational experiences.

On June 13, 2026—50 years to the day when the Maryland Science Center first opened—that history will be celebrated and exciting plans for an enhanced public experience will be announced with a groundbreaking for the renovated Harbor Plaza and a day of anniversary activities. The ceremony will also mark the completion of the Maryland Science Center's \$15.2 million *Transforming Our Future: 50th Anniversary Campaign*.

"The mission and importance of the Maryland Science Center are as relevant today as it was 50 years ago," says Mark Potter, the Science Center President and CEO. "In 1976, we were innovators and trailblazers, starting the momentum that led to one of the country's most celebrated urban redevelopments. Five decades later, we're still a national model—for informal science education and the joy of scientific discovery."

50 Year Milestones

In 1961, the Greater Baltimore Committee proposed to create a permanent location for the Maryland Academy of Sciences, the first scientific institution in the state and one of the oldest institutions in the country established in 1797. In 1966, Baltimore City voters approved a referendum to build a science center on the site of a former fish oil refinery at the southwest corner of the Inner Harbor.

Ground was broken for the Maryland Science Center at the corner of Light Street and Key Highway on September 9, 1971. Astronaut Joseph P. Allen joined Science Center and dignitaries as they used an authentic lunar drill—one of six developed to probe the surface of the moon—for the ceremony.

The new building opened on Sunday, June 13, 1976. The octagonal, windowless structure in the Brutalist style was designed by Edward Durell Stone (who also designed The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

and Radio City Music Hall in New York), in partnership with Charles M. Nes, Jr. of Nes, Campbell and Partners, a Baltimore architectural firm. The design was true to Stone's philosophy for museums that visitors should not be distracted from exhibits by what is outside the building. The new three-story museum included two floors of exhibits and a planetarium.

A 400-seat Maryland Science Center's IMAX Theater opened in 1987 with the largest indoor movie screen in the state—75 feet wide and 55 feet tall.

In 2004, a 40,000 square foot expansion included a glass atrium and an exhibit hall with a dozen life-size dinosaurs.

Since it opened in 1976, more than 15 million residents of, and travelers to, Maryland have visited the Maryland Science Center. Today, families, school children on field trips, summer campers, and educators explore interactive exhibits on space travel, the human body, physics, dinosaurs, and energy. They marvel at the night sky in the digital planetarium and travel to exotic locations through films in the IMAX Theater. At dedicated labs and in constant demonstrations, they become scientists working through experiments.

Harbor Plaza renovation

The plaza between the Inner Harbor promenade and the Maryland Science Center entrance will be transformed into an outdoor science exploration experience. Inner Harbor visitors will explore fossils and gravity in a lush, green space. The brick steps and plaza will be replaced by reclaimed paving and native plants, creating a shade canopy along a sloping lawn. Improved water management to reduce the impact on the Chesapeake Bay. Pathway markers will introduce visitors to noted Maryland scientists and scientific discoveries.

Renovation will begin in Fall 2026.

A ceremonial groundbreaking for the Harbor Plaza renovation will be held on Saturday, June 13, 2026 at 10:00 am. Participants will include Governor Wes Moore, county executives, state and city representatives, and business and philanthropic leaders.

Transforming Our Future: 50th Anniversary Campaign

The June 13 ceremony will also celebrate the completion of the Maryland Science Center historic fundraising campaign. The initial \$10 million campaign was announced in October 2024. Less than two years later, the campaign exceeded its goal by 50%: **\$15.2 million has been raised as of May 2026.**

Campaign elements included the creation of the new *Space, presented by Northrop Grumman* exhibit and *Make, presented by The Kahlert Foundation* DIY space which opened in December 2025, relocation and expansion of the *Demonstration Stage, presented by Calvert Hall*, and the *Design, Build, Test, presented by IBEW Local 24* expansion of the Kids Room. The campaign also increased access to Maryland Science Center experiences through \$5 weekend and summer admission for Marylanders with a Maryland SNAP or Maryland WIC card and the extension of free admission for Maryland school groups through *Science Beyond the Classroom, powered by Constellation*.

50th Anniversary Celebration

The anniversary festivities on Saturday, June 13 will include *Throwback Pricing*, with 1976 admission prices all day (\$1 for children, \$2.50 for adults, \$1.50 for seniors), live demonstrations and special hands-on activities all day, and cake at Noon!