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## NEWS RELEASE



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### **PALEONTOLOGIST UNVEILS NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN WRINKLE-FACED CARNIVORE** GARFIELD CONSERVATORY OFFERS HOME TO NEW AFRICAN DINOSAUR

The Garfield Park Conservatory became home today to the fossil skull of a wrinkle-faced, meat-eating dinosaur whose cousins lived as far away as South America and India. Discovered in the African Sahara by a team led by National Geographic Explorer-in-Residence and University of Chicago paleontologist Dr. Paul Sereno, *Rugops primus*, meaning "first wrinkle face," will join the cast of dinosaurs already starring in the Conservatory's ***GIANTS: African Dinosaurs created by Project Exploration*** exhibit running through September 6<sup>th</sup>.

The 95 million-year-old discovery, belonging to a group of southern carnivorous dinosaurs called abelosaurids, is believed to have measured approximately 30 feet long with a short, round snout and delicate teeth. The skull of *Rugops* had a tough covering of scales or surface armor, and the bones were riddled with arteries and veins, leaving a telltale crisscross of grooves. "It's not the kind of head designed for fighting or bone-crushing," Dr. Sereno said. Instead, he believes *Rugops* was a scavenger, using its head to pick at carrion rather than fighting other animals for food.

Dr. Sereno unveiled the latest dinosaur unearthed in Africa at the Conservatory five months after the opening of ***GIANTS*** and the simultaneous unveiling of a 110 million-year-old species of pterosaur, a flying reptile found in the southern Sahara. The exhibition premieres the largest display of new African dinosaurs ever assembled under one roof and marks the first time in 150 years that a dinosaur exhibit had been developed specifically for a botanical setting.

"The Park District is thrilled to add this important scientific discovery to the popular **GIANTS** exhibit at our west side gem," said Chicago Park District General Superintendent Tim Mitchell. "Combining the science of paleontology with the science of plants has proven very successful in attracting Chicagoans – especially kids – to the Conservatory."

Since the opening of **GIANTS** at the end of December 2003, the Garfield Park Conservatory has attracted more than 14,000 children to the lush botanical hothouse, the largest young audience the facility has seen since it opened its doors in 1908. The rush of children and teacher-led school groups determined to experience the unique exhibit is cause to celebrate for **GIANTS'** creator, Project Exploration, a Chicago-based non-profit organization, founded by Sereno and educator Gabrielle Lyon, whose primary focus is to make science accessible to the public – especially city kids and girls.

**GIANTS** is made possible by the generous donations of presenting sponsors ComEd, an Exelon Company, and The Boeing Company.

**GIANTS**, and the newest addition of *Rugops*, can be viewed every day at the Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Avenue, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Thursdays from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm. A suggested donation of \$3 is appreciated.

For more information on **GIANTS**, please visit [www.dinogiants.org](http://www.dinogiants.org).

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For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 7,300 acres of parkland, 552 parks, 32 beaches, nine museums, two world-class conservatories, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 natural areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit [www.chicagoparkdistrict.com](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com) or contact the Chicago Park District at **312/742.PLAY** or **312/747.2001** (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, **312/742.PLAY**.