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Date: October 30, 2007

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JSU physics professor honored for excellence in teaching

Observatory on campus to bear her name

(JACKSON, Miss.) – Mehri Fadavi, a physics professor at Jackson State University, received the 2007 Outstanding College Science Teacher Award from the Mississippi Science Teachers Association on Oct. 23.

Fadavi, who has taught at Jackson State for 14 years, is also the program director of the Mississippi Academy for Science Teaching.

“It is an achievement when in your field you have accomplished so much that you become the best in the state,” said Fadavi, who was recognized at the association’s annual conference.

Fadavi, a Ridgeland resident, is a native of Esfahan, Iran. She earned a doctorate in physics in 1981 from Keele University in Staffordshire, England, and a bachelor’s degree in physics in 1977 from Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran.

On Nov. 5, Jackson State’s Department of Physics, Atmospheric Sciences and Geoscience in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology will name its largest observatory on campus after Fadavi. The observatory, one of the largest in the state, sits atop the Just Hall of Science.

“It’s is a great honor because people always dedicate things to people after they are dead, yet I am alive,” she said.

The future Mehri Fadavi Observatory houses a 14-inch telescope with automated capability synchronized with the dome, which rotates 360 degrees with a computer-controlled mount and a camera to record digital images for day-time and night-time viewings, according to the fall 2006 edition of “CSET News.”

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Quinton L. Williams, chair of the Department of Physics, Atmospheric Sciences and Geoscience, said the faculty chose Fadavi for the honor because of her efforts to get the observatory equipped, automated, funded and plugged into an international network.

“That in itself is phenomenal,” Williams said. “We thought it was fitting to name it after her after all her hard work.”

For more information about the observatory, contact Mehri Fadavi at 601-979-3622 or mfadavi@jsums.edu.

Photo: Mehri Fadavi (center), a physics professor at Jackson State University, is pictured with Rita Presley (left), JSU’s associate vice president for Research & Sponsored Programs, and Pamala Heard (right), a data management specialist at JSU. <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/Fadavi.MSTA.JPG>

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About Jackson State University

Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Jackson State’s nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi’s Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with three satellite campuses throughout the city. For more information, visit www.jsums.edu.