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ECU SPONSORS THOMAS HARRIOT QUADRICIENTENNIAL CONFERENCE
CELEBRATING 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF HARRIOT’S USE OF THE TELESCOPE

GREENVILLE, N.C. (March 23, 2009) — Engaged in one of the world’s first international space races, Thomas Harriot, whose name adorns the East Carolina University College of Arts and Sciences, was among the first citizens of our planet to pick up a telescope in 1609 and study the planets, stars and moons.

Now, 400 years later, Harriot’s pioneering explorations will be commemorated in a four-day conference sponsored by the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

“Many of Harriot’s recorded observations were path breaking, prescient and enlightening, not only to his own fertile mind, but also within the community of luminaries with whom he communicated,” says ECU historian Dr. Larry Tise. “This historic departure by Harriot becomes a focal and telling moment in which to commemorate his many lifetime explorations and his personal contributions to the expansion of knowledge.”

Organized and hosted by, Tise, the Thomas Harriot Quadricentennial Conference will be held from April 1 – 4. The conference is free and open to the public, with conference sessions at historic venues across eastern North Carolina, from Chapel Hill to Manteo.

The conference will consist of workshops on map-making and archaeological excavations, as well as a variety of public lectures – featuring two dozen researchers and historians – presenting new findings on the initial explorations and settlements of the Outer Banks of North Carolina and the charting of both coastal waters and nighttime skies.

For additional information about the Thomas Harriot Quadricentennial Conference, or for a complete program roster containing detailed event titles, times and locations, go to www.ecu.edu/harriot400. For additional questions about the conference, contact Tise at 252.328.1026 or tisel@ecu.edu.

Principal Conference Events:

Wednesday, April 1, the opening conference topic, “The Space Race of 1609 – Galileo, Thomas Harriot and the Invention of the Telescope,” will include various presentations from 2 – 8 p.m. at the Morehead Planetarium on the campus of the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

On Thursday, April 2, conference topics will include “Navigating American Waters: Harriot Absorbing the Knowledge of Sailing Men,” from 11 a.m. – noon at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh; “Illuminating a New World: John White, Thomas Harriot and the Creation of the First Images of North Carolina,” from 3 – 5 p.m. in the Jenkins and Science and Technology Buildings on the ECU campus; and “Measuring New
Worlds: Thomas Harriot and the Expansion of Scientific Knowledge,” at 7 p.m. in the ECU Science and Technology Building.

Friday, April 3, “Thomas Harriot Fully Considered: A Quadricentennial Evaluation,” will include sessions lasting from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. in ECU’s Joyner Library.

Finally, on Saturday, April 4, topics will include “Exploring America: Traces of Thomas Harriot on Roanoke Island,” from 10 a.m. – noon at the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site in Manteo; and “Encountering Harriot: Native American Views on Hungry, Discourteous and Violent English Intruders,” from 2 – 5 p.m. at the Roanoke Island Festival Park Auditorium in Manteo.