

STATUS OF THE JAMES M. DuPONT METEORITE COLLECTION 1995 TO 2004.

P.P. Sipiera¹, K.J. Cole¹, J.R. Schwade¹, G.A. Jerman² and B.D. Dod³. ¹Schmitt Meteorite Research Group, Harper College, Palatine, IL 60067 USA, psipiera@harpercollege.edu. ²Metallurgical Diagnostic Facility, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, AL 35812 USA. ³Dept. of Physics and Earth Sciences, Mercer University, Macon, GA 31207 USA.

Introduction: From the mid 1950's until his death in 1991, James M. DuPont of Watchung, New Jersey gradually amassed the world's largest private collection of meteorites. His last (1991) catalogue represented over 1,000 recognized meteorites and numerous unclassified specimens. Shortly after his death in July, 1991, the Planetary Studies Foundation of Algonquin, Illinois was asked to organize and inventory his collection. As a result of this work it was determined that the total number of recognized meteorites stood at 970, with an additional 45 unclassified specimens [1]. In 1995, the Planetary Studies Foundation acquired the entire collection and proceeded to return it to active status by analyzing the unclassified meteorites and acquiring new specimens through purchases, trades, and field research. As a result of these efforts the collection has grown to over 1400 recognized meteorites.

Acquisitions: The Planetary Studies Foundation decided to increase the collection by first contacting reputable meteorite dealers to make purchases or initiate trades for recognized meteorites. Secondly, new specimens were acquired for research purposes directly from individuals working in the deserts of North Africa. A cooperative effort developed between Richard and Roland Pelisson (SaharaMet) which led to the classification of 78 meteorites from Algeria, Libya and Western Sahara [2]. The Planetary Studies Foundation was also presented with the opportunity to conduct three expeditions to search for meteorites in Antarctica. These efforts recovered a total of 54 meteorites over three field seasons [3, 4, 5]. In addition, the unclassified meteorites from the original DuPont collection were examined and submitted for acceptance to the Meteoritical Society.

Summary: Ten years after its acquisition by the Planetary Studies Foundation, the James M. DuPont Meteorite Collection remains a viable resource for meteorite researchers as well as an educational tool for the general public. From May, 1998 through June, 2000 over 200 specimens from the DuPont Collection were displayed at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama. The Planetary Studies Foundation is currently working on creating a virtual meteorite museum on its website: www.planets.org which will feature a photo and description of every meteorite in its collection. In addition, numerous researchers have requested and received material from the collection for their specific studies. Cooperative research between various institutions is encouraged and appreciated for classifying the most exciting specimens.

References: [1] Sipiera, P.P. et al. 1995. *Meteoritics* 30: 579. [2] Cole, K.J. et al. 2003. *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* 38:A71. [3] Sipiera, P.P. et al. 2000. *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* 35:A148-149. [4] Sipiera, P.P. et al. 2002. *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* 37:A131. [5] Sipiera, P.P. et al. 2002. *Meteoritics and Planetary Science* 37:A132.