

## **Larry Bell**

Sr. Vice President for Strategic Initiatives  
Museum of Science, Boston

Larry Bell is Sr. Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at the Museum of Science in Boston and the Director of the Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network. NISE Net is a major initiative funded by NSF to raise public awareness, understanding, and engagement with nanoscale science, engineering, and technology. The Museum of Science is leading a collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Exploratorium, and a number of other partners, to create exhibits and programs and a network of science museum staff and nanoscale researchers working together to provide the public with informal educational experiences at sites throughout the U.S. Over 220 sites participated in NanoDays 2009 between March 28 and April 5.

Larry Bell has worked in Education and Exhibits at the Museum of Science in Boston in various roles since 1971, serving as Education Associate, Director of Exhibit Research and Planning, Head of Exhibits, Associate Director, Vice President for Exhibits, and Sr. Vice President for Research, Development, and Production; and Sr. Vice President for Exhibits and Programs. In 1983, he was instrumental in the formation of the Science Museum Exhibit Collaborative, a collaboration of eight science centers throughout the U.S. formed to produce and share traveling exhibitions and which is still in operation today. Through a series of National Science Foundation grants from 1986 to 2005, he led development of a new model for science center exhibits employing constructivist learning experiences to provide visitors with practice in scientific thinking skills. Through this long-range effort, the Museum gained new expertise in formative evaluation as an integral component of the exhibit design process and in designing exhibits to include visitors with disabilities and, ultimately, in universal design.

In 2006 he became Associate Director of the Museum's National Center for Technological Literacy (NCTL). The NCTL promotes engineering and technology education in schools for students in grades k-12 and in informal educational institutions, like hands-on science centers. Bell's focus is on the informal educational institutions, and includes opening the public's understanding of technology to include the human-made world broadly, providing visitors with first-hand experience with engineering design, and engaging the public in dialogue and deliberation around societal issues associated with new developments in science and technology. In 2008, Bell served as co-leader of an inquiry group on Public Engagement with Science for CAISE (the NSF-funded Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education.)

He received a B.S. in Physics and an M.S. in Earth and Planetary Science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1971.