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**MOODY GARDENS ADDS NEW KING PENGUIN CHICK TO PLAYER LINEUP**

*Fans have a chance to help name baby bird after their favorite Houston Astros player*

**GALVESTON, Texas (February 16, 2018)**— And then there were two. Moody Gardens is celebrating the hatching of a second King penguin chick this season.

The chick, weighing in at 148 grams on Thursday, was born Tuesday, Feb. 13 to mom Ryan and dad Professor. This is the first chick for the pair and the second chick to hatch within the last two weeks.

Both mom and dad are original Moody Gardens King penguins. The birds hatched aboard a Russian research vessel called the Professor Multanovskiy as the Moody Gardens staff returned from an expedition to South Georgia Island to collect the penguin eggs in 1998 for the opening of the Aquarium Pyramid.

The recent chick dad, Professor, carries the ship's namesake. Ryan is named after famed baseball player Nolan Ryan. Both penguin parents turn 20 years old this spring.

"We are thrilled to have a second successful chick hatch this breeding season at the South Atlantic Penguin Exhibit," said Diane Olsen, Moody Gardens assistant curator of penguins and seals. "Mom and dad are taking wonderful care of the chick. We made improvements to the exhibit with the renovation last year to provide the best environment possible for the birds' breeding success and this just shows that all that work paid off."

Spring is just around the corner and the new parents of both chicks are working to bulk up their babies as they train to be the newest fan-favorites inside the aquarium. Fans voted to name the first chick to this season's lineup Astro, in honor of the Houston Astros, as the team kicks off spring training this week.

"With Astro now on the team and mom carrying the namesake of former Astro Nolan Ryan, it only makes sense that this new baby will carry on the winning tradition," Olsen said. "Many of our King penguins are named after famous sports figures and we couldn't pass up this chance to add a new Houston Astros player to our penguin colony."

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Starting today, voters can go to Moody Gardens' Facebook and Twitter pages to name the chick after their favorite Houston Astros player – Springer, Altuve, Verlander or Correa.

The Moody Gardens Aquarium Pyramid is one of the largest and most diverse aquariums in the Southwest. The South Atlantic Penguin Exhibit is home to King, Gentoo, Chinstrap, Macaroni, Southern Rockhopper and Northern Rockhopper penguins. Moody Gardens added a second penguin exhibit featuring a new species of birds – the subtropical Humboldt penguins – following the \$37 million renovation completed last summer.

Guests can experience a fun and awe-inspiring journey wonderfully complemented with conservation messages that underscore the vital importance of the oceans inside the Aquarium Pyramid. Travel from the Gulf of Mexico to the South Atlantic, South Pacific, North Pacific and as each ocean exhibit highlights different marine sanctuaries and different aspects of our relationship to the seas.

For more information call 800-582-4673 or visit [www.moodygardens.org](http://www.moodygardens.org).

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