

The Astronauts Memorial Foundation



March 5, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

The Astronauts Memorial Foundation honors and memorializes those astronauts who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our space program and our nation. These astronauts sacrificed their lives as pioneers in human space flight.

All of the astronauts who have flown subsequently would tell you that they succeeded by standing on the shoulders of their fallen colleagues. Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Mike Collins were only able to fly Apollo 11 to the moon after we lost Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee on a simulated countdown to Apollo 1.

After Challenger, hundreds of improvements were made in design, manufacture and operation of human rated spacecraft. Those seven astronauts would be proud of what was learned and accomplished as a result of their sacrifices. The Astronauts Memorial Foundation was created during this time; including the Space Mirror Memorial and the Center for Space Education.

In a ceremony that we conducted in 2003 placing the names of the Columbia astronauts on the Space Mirror Memorial, Dr. John Clark, the husband of Laurel Clark, who perished on Columbia, speaking for the families of the Columbia crew, said that in spite of the risks, America must remain a *space faring* nation and not become a *space fearing* nation.

The astronauts who we lost serve as models for future generations to accept risks willingly in the pursuit of exploration and knowledge, so that they too can contribute to the continued success of our nation.

In order to honor those astronauts and their families who have sacrificed for all of the benefits of human exploration, and to allow Americans continued pride in our space program, we urge you to vigorously support uninterrupted continuation of U.S. human space flight systems, including the Space Shuttle, and to maintain NASA's leadership in space exploration.

Sincerely,

Michael J. McCulley
Chairman of the Board
Former Astronaut

Stephen Feldman, Ph.D.
President