

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Astronaut Scholarship Foundation Honors Christina H. Koch with the 2020 Neil Armstrong™ Award of Excellence**



**ORLANDO** – The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) is proud to announce 2000-2001 scholar, Christina H. Koch, as the 2020 [Neil Armstrong™ Award of Excellence](#) recipient.

Koch, a [NASA astronaut](#) who returned to Earth after the longest-ever single spaceflight by a woman, was an ASF scholarship recipient in 2000 and in 2001, while she was attending North Carolina State University (NCSU). The presentation of the annual Armstrong award was delayed due to COVID-19 but will be presented during this year’s ASF Innovators Weekend, August 2021.

“I am truly thankful to receive this prestigious award from the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation,” said Christina Koch. “It is a great honor to be placed in such renowned ranks as those of the past Astronaut Scholar honorees, all of whom have made significant contributions in the realm of science and innovation.”

The Neil Armstrong™ Award of Excellence was established in 2016 through a partnership with the [Purdue Research Foundation](#), the Armstrong family and Jim Hays, a friend of Neil Armstrong’s. Intended to pay tribute to the legacy of Armstrong and his fellow space explorers, this honor is bestowed upon an Astronaut Scholar alumni who exemplifies personal character and professional achievement, mirroring the core values of its namesake.

“Christina is a true inspiration to all Astronaut Scholars, as well as the next generation,” said Curt Brown, Chairman of ASF’s Board of Directors. “We are tremendously proud, not only of her achievements in breaking new ground for women in STEM, but also for demonstrating that dreams can become a reality through commitment and persistence.”

In addition to serving as a flight engineer on the [International Space Station](#) for three expeditions, Koch has earned several distinctions and recognitions as a woman during her time with NASA. Among these is the completion of six spacewalks (totaling 42 hours and 15 minutes), the first three of which were all-female. In spending a total of 328 days in space, Koch also set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman (completing 5,248 orbits around the Earth).

Born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and raised in Jacksonville, North Carolina, Koch graduated from NCSU with a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering and in physics in 2001, and with a Master of Science in electrical engineering in 2002. After completing her education, Koch moved to Houston, Texas to join the NASA astronaut corps and concluded her astronaut training in 2015. She has remained passionate about technical instructing, volunteer tutoring and educational outreach throughout her career, and most recently, she earned an Honorary Ph.D. from North Carolina State University.

To learn more about the Neil Armstrong™ Award of Excellence and its previous recipients, click [here](#).

### **About Astronaut Scholarship Foundation**

The [Astronaut Scholarship Foundation](#) (ASF) is an Orlando-based, 501(c)3 nonprofit commemorating the legacy of America's pioneering astronauts. Founded by the six surviving Mercury 7 Astronauts in 1984, ASF partners with industry leaders, universities and individual donors to achieve its mission of supporting and rewarding the best and brightest college students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

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