



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Thursday, November 9, 2023

### **Gemini & Apollo Astronaut, Col, USAF, Ret, Test Pilot, and Author Dies at 95**

The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) is saddened to report the loss of a true American Space Pioneer. Frank Frederick Borman II, Col, USAF, Ret., and NASA astronaut passed away on November 7, 2023, at the age of 95; he is survived by two children, Frederick and Edwin, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Borman is best known for setting the 14-day spaceflight endurance record while serving as command pilot alongside pilot Jim Lovell on Gemini VII (December 1965) and commanding the first mission to fly around the moon with crewmates Bill Anders and Lovell on Apollo 8 (December 1968).

Frank Borman was born in Gary, Indiana on March 14, 1928. In 1950, he graduated with a Bachelor of Science from West Point and upon his Air Force commission, he served with the 44th Fighter Bomber Squadron in the Philippines from 1951-1953. Returning to the United States, he attended Cal Tech and graduated with a Master of Science in aeronautical engineering in 1957. After returning to West Point for three years to serve as an assistant professor of thermodynamics and fluid mechanics, he embarked on a new adventure - Aerospace Research Pilot School and became a test pilot. During Borman's military career, he logged over 6,000 hours flying time.

In 1962 he was selected as part of NASA's second group of astronauts. During his time with NASA he was commander of both his space flights: Gemini VII, and Apollo 8, as well as serving as a member of the Apollo 204 Fire Investigation Board, examining the causes of the fire which killed three astronauts during the Apollo 1 tragedy. Later, he became the Apollo Resident Manager, heading the team that re-engineered the Apollo spacecraft.

Not only tasked with proving humans could remain in space for the duration of a 14-day flight, as Commander of Gemini VII, Borman was challenged with the task to rendezvous and dock with another spacecraft, which, he alongside Jim Lovell completed successfully when they connected with the Gemini VI spacecraft flown by astronauts Tom Stafford and Wally Schirra on December 15, 1965; this was the historic first successful rendezvous of two crewed spacecraft. The Gemini VII mission, along with the entire Gemini Program pioneered the technology driving today's exploration. This "Bridge to the Moon" was the connection between the Mercury Program, America's first effort to determine if humans could survive in space, to the Apollo Program's lunar landing flights.

Borman's second mission saw him once again as a commander, this time during the Apollo Program on Apollo 8, once again flying with Jim Lovell, and with the addition of Bill Anders. On December 21, 1968 the three men launched into space and thereafter, Apollo 8 became the first manned spacecraft to leave low Earth orbit, reach the moon, and ultimately return to Earth.

During a very tumultuous time in our country's history with the assassinations of Senator Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr, along with the Vietnam war and its mass American casualties, Apollo 8 served as a beacon of hope - that good still existed in our country, and in our world. On Christmas Eve, 1968 as they became the first human beings to orbit another heavenly body, the astronauts read from the Bible, the book of Genesis; approximately 1/3 of the world's population listened to the message delivered by the crew from outer space. Borman closed out the evening's broadcast with "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas, and God bless all of you - all of you on the good Earth."

With spaceflight behind him, in 1970 Borman undertook a special presidential mission, a worldwide tour to seek support for the release of American prisoners of war held by North Vietnam. After retirement from NASA he continued his career with Eastern Airlines. Borman began as a special advisor to the airlines and retired in 1986 as the Chairman of the Board. In 1972 while he was working in the capacity of Senior Vice President of Operations, he flew down to the horrific crash scene of Eastern Flight 401 in order to take part in the rescue mission for the survivors. Wading in the murky swamp waters of the Florida Everglades he assisted in loading the rescue helicopters. If his life wasn't impressive enough, he later became an author when he penned a book Countdown: An Autobiography, recounting his time with NASA and his adventures in space, as well as his challenging venture with Eastern Airlines.

Frank Borman will always be remembered by ASF for his innumerable contributions for the betterment of this country, and our world. His tireless work as a space explorer, his behind-the-scenes investigative work during the Apollo 1 tragedy, as well as his part as U.S. ambassador for American Prisoners of War and his outstanding rescue efforts, paints the picture of a true American Hero; and HERO he will forever be. Godspeed Commander!

###

**Media Contact:**

Caroline Schumacher

Astronaut Scholarship Foundation

407-403-5901 | [caroline@astronautscholarship.org](mailto:caroline@astronautscholarship.org)