FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2025

Astronaut Scholarship Foundation establishes an Astronaut Scholarship program at the University of Maryland in honor of veteran NASA Astronaut Judy Resnik

Longtime ASF supporter Jim Long and veteran NASA Astronaut Dr. Kathy Sullivan donated $87,500 to establish an Astronaut Scholarship Program at the University of Maryland in memory of veteran NASA Astronaut Dr. Judy Resnik.

ORLANDO – The Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) recently announced its partnership with the University of Maryland to introduce the Astronaut Scholarship program in honor of veteran NASA Astronaut Judy Resnik. This scholarship, funded by a generous $87,500 donation from longtime ASF supporter Jim Long and veteran NASA Astronaut Dr. Kathy Sullivan, commemorates Dr. Resnik's legacy and provides financial assistance to Astronaut Scholars at the University of Maryland, Dr. Resnik's alma mater. The first recipient will be announced with the 2025 Astronaut Scholar Class in June.

Dr. Resnik made history as the second American woman in space, serving as a mission specialist aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery in 1984. Tragically, she lost her life during her second mission on the Space Shuttle Challenger in 1986, just 73 seconds after launch. Her contribution to space exploration and STEM education continues to inspire future generations.

Long and Dr. Sullivan were deeply moved by veteran NASA Astronaut Dr. Mary Cleave's call for a lasting tribute to Dr. Resnik. Before her passing in 2023, Dr. Cleave, a close friend and colleague of Dr. Resnik's, encouraged fellow astronauts to honor Dr. Resnik's remarkable contributions. In response, Long and Dr. Sullivan made a generous donation to establish the scholarship, ensuring Dr. Resnik's legacy will continue to shape the future of space exploration and STEM education.

"Judy Resnik was an incredible woman and astronaut," said Jim Long. "It is honor to be able to support a scholarship in her memory at the University of Maryland. Through this scholarship, her legacy will continue to inspire students to explore new boundaries and pursue their dreams."

"Judy always relished the opportunity she had to share advice and inspiration with young people, often taking time to send thoughtful hand-written notes to students who wrote to her about their dream of a space career," said Dr. Kathy Sullivan. "The new Astronaut Scholarship at the University of Maryland will essentially continue her good works in this vein, giving recipients tangible and professional support to help them reach their goals. I can't think of a better way to honor her than by a living memorial like this, that continues to shape our future. She would be delighted."

The Astronaut Scholarship provides financial support, mentorship, access to ASF's extensive alumni network and professional development. University of Maryland Astronaut Scholars will now benefit from these opportunities as well. The donation will fund the scholarship for the next five years; however, the scholarship will continue beyond that as a lasting tribute to Dr. Resnik's contributions to STEM.

The University of Maryland joins a network of 50 university partners nationwide that participate in the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation's merit-based scholarship program, which awards up to $15,000 to outstanding college juniors and seniors pursuing careers in STEM fields. The creation of the Judy Resnik Scholarship was officially announced during the University of Maryland's kick-off event on February 5, 2025, where students had the opportunity to learn more about ASF's mission and programs.

“We are thrilled to welcome the University of Maryland as our newest partner in honoring Dr. Resnik’s legacy,” said Caroline Schumacher, President and CEO of the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation. “The university is a leader in STEM education and exemplifies the innovation and excellence that Dr. Resnik championed throughout her career.”

ASF is dedicated to empowering the best and brightest college students in STEM through scholarships, mentorship and professional development opportunities. For more information about ASF and how you can contribute to future Astronaut Scholars, visit our website here.

About the 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 in 1984 by the six surviving Mercury 7 Astronauts, ASF partners with industry leaders, universities and individual donors to support and reward exceptional college students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Over the past 40 years, more than $9 million has been awarded to more than 850 college students. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of the Treasury policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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