



**Office of Science and Technology Policy**  
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**STATEMENT**  
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**Statement on the Loss of the Spacecraft Columbia and its Astronauts**  
**From**  
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The scientific community mourns the loss of the seven astronauts who perished as they neared the end of their mission aboard the Columbia spacecraft. They gave their lives in pursuit of knowledge in the hazardous environment of outer space. Their willingness to put their lives at risk is a measure of the great value they placed upon discovery.

Frontiers exist because the means of breaching them are difficult – the first to reach them show the rest of us the way. Each hard lesson learned prepares us to go farther. Each new thing disclosed inspires the quest.

To the families of these brave and talented men and women, we grieve with you. Your loss is great because those you loved were great. The example of their sacrifice compels us to renew our own commitment to the search for truth and knowledge, and to the strength of will required to sustain it in the face of difficulty.

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