

Lori Garver, NASA Deputy Administrator
Smithsonian/Boeing Space Shuttle Tribute Reception
National Air and Space Museum
September 7, 2011

Good evening. On behalf of Administrator Bolden and the entire NASA family, I want to thank John Benton, Brewster Shaw and everyone who had a hand in organizing this extraordinary salute to the Space Shuttle.

From its beginnings, human space flight has been an American success story made possible by the seamless collaboration of government, the private sector and citizens from all walks of life.

NASA's partnership with Boeing during the 30 years of the Shuttle program as well as in the development and maintenance of the International Space Station is a remarkable example what our nation can accomplish when we work together in common purpose for the common good.

I want to take this opportunity to personally wish my friend, Brewster Shaw all the best as he heads into retirement.

Thank you, Brewster, for your outstanding contributions to America and the space program as a combat pilot, shuttle commander and Boeing's chief space exploration executive. NASA and America are better because of your service.

I also want to thank all the astronauts, scientists, engineers, employees and contractors who helped design, maintain and fly the most sophisticated launch vehicle in the history of human space flight.

This evening's event is named a Tribute. I looked up the definition of the word tribute and it is a gift, testimonial, compliment, given as due or in acknowledgement of the gratitude or esteem. That is what I offer to each of you tonight.

The shuttle advanced our knowledge of our universe. It connected the world through global communications. It showed us that we could service satellites on orbit such as Hubble which has opened up the Universe. It made possible the construction of the International Space Station – the centerpiece of human space flight for the coming decade. Its brave crews included the first American women and minorities in orbit, as well as the astronauts and cosmonauts of many other nations.

I ask that we pause for a moment of silence to remember the lives of those crews who we lost in flight.

STS-51-L, Challenger, and STS-107, Columbia, must always remind us that pushing the limits of human achievement is never without risk and the shuttles achievement came at a very high cost. These crews helped lead us to a future of unlimited possibility. We are forever grateful for their service and sacrifice.

I want to offer my thanks to the Smithsonian and the National Air and Space Museum for your commitment to preserving for posterity the artifacts of America's remarkable history of flight and space exploration.

We are excited that the Discovery orbiter will soon be on display at the Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, VA.

And thank you Linda Shiner, for the outstanding Air and Space Magazine collector's edition highlighting 30 years of Space Shuttle history.

Our enduring tribute to the many accomplishments of the shuttle is the ISS. The ISS will continue to be the centerpiece of NASA's human space flight activities and a hub of research activities that not only expand our understanding of the universe, but also benefit life here on Earth. It is our toe-hold to our future exploration efforts as we venture ever farther – allowing us to truly become a space faring civilization.

The final shuttle flight marked the end of an era, but today, our tribute must be to commit ourselves to continuing this bold adventure and to take the necessary – if sometimes difficult – steps to ensure America's leadership in human spaceflight for the future.

We know that nothing short of this would be a worthy tribute to the amazing shuttle team.

Thank you.

And now please enjoy the rest of your evening.