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September 2011: For You, Shuttle Family

On Aug. 23, University of Houston-Clear Lake hosted the opening reception for "**Celebrating Shuttle: An American Icon,**" a **NASA/JSC photo exhibition** that commemorates the 30 years of the Shuttle with an image from each of the 135 missions. The university was created because of a request from then-Johnson Space Center Director Bob Gilruth. We have been in partnership since. Many UHCL alumni came to the university to improve their skills or expand their knowledge as they worked on the Shuttle project. To all of them, and everyone in our community, I shared this poem at the event.

Thank you Shuttle family.

For You, Shuttle Family

by Dion McInnis©

IMHO (in my honest opinion)
When the X-15 was developed on the QT
JQ Public had no idea
Of what incredible things were to be.

In government time scales of eras and eons
The STS concept moved PDQ
From conceptualization in 1958
To the first operational flight in '82

Our vocabulary would never be the same
We learned ET was not an alien but in a stack
EVAs for the ISS
Helped to keep our work on track.

Our visions, our hopes and our pride changed
Technology went places we've never been before
Amazing men and women worked together
To design MLP, TPS and much more.

Tragedies and challenges did not deter our quest
MMOD is tiny but quite deadly
We made ACES and OMS, PAM-D and PASS
We developed new technology to help us see.

Roll pitch and yaw is not a dance move
Though graceful as ballet it appears
Dedicated people pursued our nation's dreams
Despite struggles, despite tragedy, despite fear



We felt the power of the SRBs in our feet
As we watched the launch across the bay
Now...all the acronyms are forgotten
And we pause....so we can say

You gave us breath;
You took our breath away.

You made us laugh until we cried;
You made us cry 'til we held each other.

You quickened our pulse;
You stopped our hearts.

You gave wings to our dreams;
You turned our dreams into reality.

We honor you...

You who toiled with mind and body
Using the best of your gifts
For curiosity, pioneering, pride and country.

You who used language foreign to most—
From the precision of math
To the simplicity of ones and zeroes.

You who processed procurements
Managed meetings and calls
To keep purchases and conversations moving.

You who bridged international relations
On the ground and in space
Unlike governments could ever dream of doing.

You who designed or manufactured or assembled,
Checked, double-checked and rechecked,
Pondered, counseled and debated.

You who flew, who monitored, who guided or observed
As a world's flights of fancy and imagination
Resided in 135 manifests.

You who clowned for us at 200 miles aloft
Cried with us on the ground
And celebrated with us everywhere.

You who never lost faith in mission
As a world took engineering magnificence for granted
And budgets became political chess pieces.

You who went to work when there were no funds
Who traded I.D. badges as talents followed projects
Who bonded together as a competitive, supportive family.

You who took one national legacy
And turned it into another
That will stand as one of humanity's great endeavors.

You who shared your stories in classrooms
Or remained unknown to the audiences
Who watched, cheered and celebrated.

You, you and you; we appreciate you.

We...brought flowers and notes in remembrance
We watched television, movies and mpegs about you
We live in a world of technologies you created or encouraged
We swelled with patriotism and pride
We grew from your experience and knowledge
We toured your sites, heard your voices, viewed your images
We bought coffee cups, rocket pens and t-shirts
We grew up with you.
We grew.

You
Reminded us of the gifts of humanity

The power to resolve and to be resolute
To laugh and to cry;
To commit our gifts and our talents
To always, always try.

The power to overcome obstacles and fear
To bond together as family
To push our limits and boundaries
To see what there is to see.

The humbleness to see our own small world
To examine the scope of the universe
To know there is more to learn and discover
To put others and their safety first

The humbleness to avoid recognition
To put mission before honors and awards
To accept with satisfaction the patches and kudos
To keep our eyes on the stars.

The inspiration to write music and movies
To paint, photograph and sing
To let our own imaginations run wild
To believe we can do ANYthing

Cave men discovered fire long ago
You brought us answers about the universe
How far we have come since fire's discovery
Into your discoveries we are now immersed.

We don't know the names of all of you, but
We know Enterprise, Columbia and Challenger
We also know by name the others
The sisters, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavor.

On board your flights were innovative ideas
And eyes that peer into creation
You also gave us a home in space
With the International Space Station

The Space Shuttle family makes us so proud
With the talents and gifts you shared every day
We admire and respect all that you've done
Know in history, the difference you've made.

Thank you Shuttle Family



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We love stories. Human stories. Funny stories and dramatic ones.
Would you like to share *your* UHCL story? We would love to listen.