

REMARKS FOR ACTING ADMINISTRATOR ROBERT LIGHTFOOT
As Prepared
KENNEDY SPACE CENTER
DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
Jan. 26, 2017

Thank you, Charlie (Duke), for that invocation. It's a pleasure to be here with so many friends and family members of NASA past and present and to welcome the Grissom, White and Chaffee families. It's clear that you never really leave NASA.

Our work is so generational, so inspirational, that no matter when you participated, I think you always feel a part of it. And that's so important on a day like today, when we remember and honor the family members no longer with us, who passed tragically, but whose memory sustains us all.

We stand on the shoulders of those who came before as we aspire to travel farther into the solar system and achieve ever greater milestones -- with the power of our minds and hearts united toward discovery.

Every year at this time, NASA remembers all of our brave family members who have lost their lives to advance the cause of exploration, and this year is especially moving as it marks 50 years since the tragedy of Apollo 1. We will never forget Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee, nor the debt that we owe them.

Neither will we forget the crewmembers of Challenger, STS-51-L, or Columbia, STS-107, or the others who have lost their lives while extending the bounds of our capabilities while working for NASA.

As I said last night at a tribute dinner for the Apollo 1 crew, space is tough. It's a tough business we've all committed to.

I know every member of the NASA family has the utmost respect for the brave men and women who attempt the hardest thing human beings have ever done -- to break the bonds of gravity and travel farther, whether that's as a test pilot or an astronaut.

Each of us is drawn to this pursuit to cast our minds farther, to dream of the highest ideals that humans can achieve. To visit other worlds, but also to peer beyond the solar system with our technology, and to inspire people around the world to join this journey of discovery and peaceful exploration. The men and women we recognize today are still with us all every step of that journey.

As we remember our fallen heroes today, it is with enduring gratitude, respect and love. There is no replacing them, but neither will they be forgotten. They were our friends and colleagues. They were and are historic figures. But they were perhaps more importantly, husbands, fathers, sons and brothers.

The memorial plaque at the dismantled Launchpad 34 reads, "Remember them not for how they died but for those ideals for which they lived." I want everyone here, and especially those family members with us, to know that we remember these men and women lost in the cause of exploration both for their ideals and as the human beings they were.

They exemplified a pioneering spirit that helped us get where we are today, and which is advancing tomorrow's missions.

They will not be forgotten.

Godspeed to all of our fallen family members.