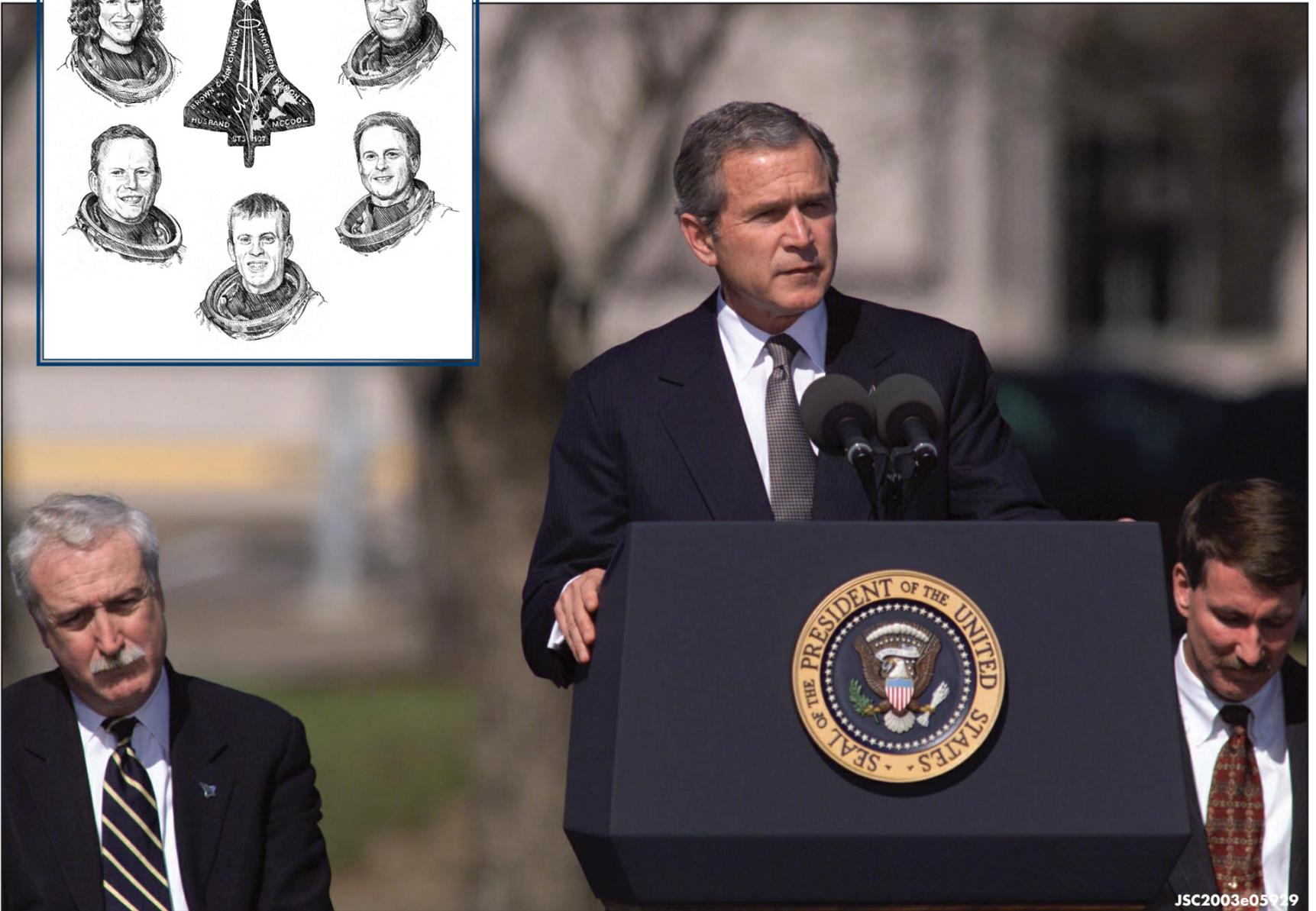
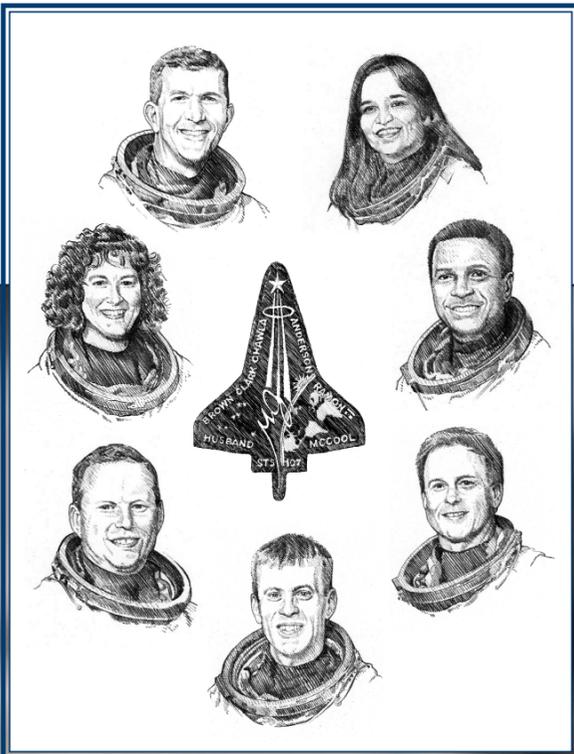


'For these seven,



JSC2003e05929

ABOVE: NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe (left) and Chief of the Astronaut Corps Capt. Kent Rominger (right) joined with President George W. Bush to honor the memory of the STS-107 crew. The event was televised across the globe.

**"Our whole nation was blessed to have such men and women serving in our space program. Their loss is deeply felt, especially in this place where so many of you called them friends. The people in NASA are being tested once again."**

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH**



JSC2003e06668

# it was a dream fulfilled'

On a beautiful, sunny afternoon, the world joined President George W. Bush, NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe and Chief of the Astronaut Corps Capt. Kent Rominger as they led us in mourning the loss of our seven cherished family members.

Four days after the tragedy, thousands of JSC employees filled the courtyard and encircled the pond to pay tribute to the STS-107 crew. It was an emotional event filled with words of sorrow, as well as cherished memories, which honored a group of people who were greatly loved and are sadly missed.

"Their mission was almost complete, and we lost them so close to home," President Bush said to the assembled group of employees, retirees, crew families and other dignitaries.

"The men and women of the *Columbia* had journeyed more than 6 million miles and were minutes away from arrival and reunion. The loss was sudden and terrible, and for their families the grief is heavy."

The President reminded those assembled that the crew was proud to serve their countries in the pursuit of knowledge to benefit the world. "We remember not only one moment of tragedy, but seven lives of great purpose and achievement," he said.

"For these seven, it was a dream fulfilled. Each of these astronauts had the daring and discipline required of their calling. Each of them knew that great endeavors are inseparable from great risk. And each of them accepted those risks willingly, even joyfully, in the cause of discovery."



JSC2003e03507



JSC2003e056703



JSC2003e05909



JSC2003e05889



S81-29212

*Columbia*, the world's first space shuttle, was unlike anything that had been seen before.

From a technical standpoint, *Columbia* would do what no other flying machine had done before: Take off like a rocket, explore space and return to Earth as a glider to be used again.

She was an example of the ingenuity and expertise of America's best and brightest who designed, built and tested her.

But what most people probably noticed first was how beautiful she was. *Columbia*, named for the first American ship to sail around the world, was said to be the female embodiment of the United States.

She was graceful, proud and daring, and she inspired all who saw her leap into the sky for the first time to follow her.

*Columbia's* first launch took place on April 12, 1981. She carried a crew of Capt. John Young, Commander, and Pilot Robert Crippen, and brought them home two days later.

The matriarch of the shuttle fleet performed 28 launches over 22 years, landing safely every time but one.

Her last mission before STS-107 was 2002's STS-109, a successful mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope.

Other notable missions for the orbiter include 1992's STS-50, the first extended-duration shuttle mission, and 1999's STS-93, when *Columbia* helped place the Chandra X-ray Observatory into orbit.

The orbiter was given numerous upgrades over the years, including a "glass cockpit" in 2001.

America's first orbiter will be greatly missed by her NASA family.

Hail *Columbia!*



STS107-S-010

## SPACE CENTER Roundup

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