

'The Columbia is lost'



As the tragic events of Feb. 1, 2003, unfolded in the Mission Control Center, the assembled team remained calm, even as they were called upon to react instantaneously to a disaster that rocked the entire world.

Despite the unimaginable pressure placed upon them in those painful moments, the MCC team put their own grief aside to handle the situation's enormity with the utmost professionalism and integrity.

The *Roundup* recognizes the skilled men and women of the Mission Control Center who were unwavering in their strength.

Thank you team for your dedication in the face of tragedy. We are proud of you!



ABOVE: A flight controller stares at the trajectory screen, which stops in Texas where mission control lost tracking data.

CENTER: A contingency plan was activated when MCC personnel realized the STS-107 crew was no longer able to communicate with them.

RIGHT: At a press conference several hours after the *Columbia* accident, the faces of Milt Heflin, Chief of the Flight Director Office, and Mr. Dittmore share their emotion over the NASA family's loss with a national TV audience.



Our STS-107 family members

Below are some special memories of the crew shared by Capt. Kent Rominger, Chief of the Astronaut Corps

RICHARD D. HUSBAND

Rick was a terrific human being and great leader. He was my Pilot on his first flight and I grew to appreciate his many talents and gifts as well as laugh at all his Amarillo sayings. My favorite saying of his was, "You know, I feel more now like I did than when I first got here."

As a matter a fact, Rick e-mailed me six days ago from Columbia with this saying in the subject line.

He was a naturally gifted pilot and an outstanding leader. He molded seven individuals from different parts of the world with diverse backgrounds and various religious beliefs into an incredibly tight-knit and productive family.



LAUREL CLARK

Laurel – the dedicated professional with many talents. She was also the queen of STS-107 paraphernalia. She had a different pastel crew shirt for every day of the week, complemented with crew patches and matching crew earrings.

She had a perpetual smile and would never send an e-mail if she could find you in person. Laurel also was very caring and would check on her crewmates and secretary when she was away on vacation. No matter how hectic the day, she inspired us with her ability to reserve time and energy for her family.



WILLIAM C. MCCOOL

Willie – he was incredibly humble with exceptional talents. He was especially gifted at quickly mastering technical information but was also known for his tremendous consideration for others. He enjoyed surprising people with fresh flowers and Hawaiian leis. Willie was uncharacteristically punctual for an astronaut and his instructors could only recall one time that Willie was late for an event over the past two years. A record probably never to be broken!



KALPANA CHAWLA

Kalpana, or "KC" to her friends, was admired personally for her extraordinary kindness and technically for her strive for perfection. She had a terrific sense of humor and loved flying airplanes with her husband and flying in space – this was her passion.

She often reminded her crewmates during their extended training flow: "Man, you're training to fly in space – what more do you want?"



MICHAEL P. ANDERSON

Mike was a perfect choice for Payload Commander: Organized, thorough and someone you could absolutely count on – a gifted leader.

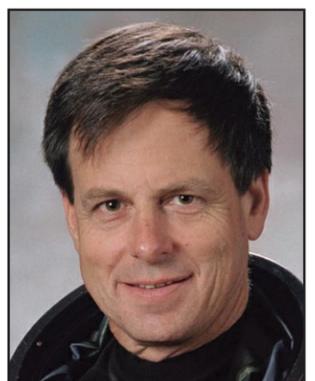
He was the quiet type, unless you asked about his family – or his Porsche. Perhaps because he was quiet, we all loved to see him laugh and he knew just when to drop a great punch line.



ILAN RAMON

Ilan – he was the perfectly poised fighter pilot with a sparkle in his eyes. His instructors remember a moment when he stood dressed in the dark blue thermal underwear we wear under our launch and entry suits, a red Santa Claus hat and joked, "Life is not a rehearsal."

Extremely caring, Ilan sent an e-mail from orbit praising each one of his crewmates and requesting that we consider flying all of them again as soon as possible. He could not imagine flying with a better crew.



DAVID M. BROWN

Smiling Dave or "Doc" to his friends – quiet and observant with piercing blue eyes. He was the bachelor of the group, and as such was constantly in search of food.

Doc also loved cameras and always had one with him, telling those he filmed to "just act like a little brown squirrel." He also had a keen sense of humor and, after a demanding simulator run, asked KC if he could "borrow her brain."



Remembering those

