

A higher place: Mountain peak dedicated in honor of *Columbia* and her crew

By Kendra Ceule

Colorado is full of magnificent mountain peaks. But for the families and friends of the STS-107 crew, none are more beautiful and majestic than Columbia Point.

Columbia Point, a 13,980-foot mountain peak in Colorado's Sangre de Cristo Mountains, was named for the Space Shuttle *Columbia* and her crew that were lost on Feb. 1, 2003. The U.S. Department of the Interior made the dedication on June 10. NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe, along with STS-107 family members, joined Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton for the announcement.

"Those who explore space in the days ahead may gaze back at Earth and know that Columbia Point is there to commend a noble mission," Norton said. "The point looks up to the heavens and it allows us, once again, to thank our heroes who soared far beyond the mountain, traveled past the sky and live on in our memories forever."

In August 2003, an expedition of STS-107 family members, astronauts and support personnel journeyed to the Sangre de Cristo mountains. Their goal was to climb Columbia Point, hold a memorial service and mount a bronze plaque. While the weather didn't fully cooperate, the group of more than 40 people was able to climb higher than 13,000 feet and hold a memorial service in view of the summit. Astronaut Scott Parazynski helped lead the expedition.

"We had a beautiful dedication ceremony and built seven rock cairns in memory of the crew," he said. "We then witnessed a spectacular four-ship F-16 missing-man fly-by."

During the ceremony, a team of three experienced climbers went to the true summit and mounted the bronze plaque. "The families were enthusiastic campers," Parazynski said, adding that many of them talked about "returning at a later date to revisit their mountain."



Columbia Point is located on the east side of Kit Carson Mountain. On the northwest shoulder of the same mountain is Challenger Point, a peak previously named in memory of the Space Shuttle *Challenger*.

At the June dedication, O'Keefe commended the heroes of both missions. "When people look upon these mountains," O'Keefe said, "they see the challenge of the American frontier – bold in vision, courageous in spirit and endless in horizon. The crew of *Columbia*, like the *Challenger* before her, had these qualities at their core. These mountains are a natural testament to their memory, their spirit of exploration and will endure forever."

In August 2003, an expedition of STS-107 family members, astronauts and support personnel journeyed to the Sangre de Cristo mountains to hold a memorial service in honor of *Columbia* and her crew.

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Photo courtesy of Scott Parazynski

NASA thanks East Texas communities for *Columbia* support

By Tiffany Travis

In appreciation for their support of *Columbia* recovery efforts, dozens of Johnson Space Center employees provided the communities of East Texas and Western Louisiana with educational and community outreach events during September and October.

The Texas cities of Corsicana, Palestine, Nacogdoches, Lufkin, Huntington, Diboll, Hudson and Hemphill, as well as Shreveport, La., participated in a variety of NASA outreach events. The activities included astronaut appearances, educational videoconference opportunities, NASA history presentations, professional teacher development sessions, presentations of Discovery Channel and Science Channel space documentaries and many different exhibits including the International Space Station Trailers exhibit, "Space Station Imagination."

The JSC Distance Learning Network (DLN) provided students and teachers an opportunity to participate in live interactive videoconferences. Using teleconference tools, students interacted with NASA experts, toured JSC facilities and observed cutting-edge technology. The DLN team presented programs to more than 1,100 students from eight different schools in the East Texas area.

Members from JSC's Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) conducted professional teacher development workshops for approximately 350 K-12 educators in the region. Topics included rockets, space food, microgravity, Earth science, spacesuits and astronomy. In addition to the workshops, AESP conducted assembly programs for students visiting the East Texas area, educating and entertaining them

on NASA history, current endeavors and future plans for our country's space program. Students were also involved with in-depth discussions on concepts like microgravity, living and working in space and robotic technology.

"Space Station Imagination" drew large crowds during its six-city tour throughout East Texas and Western Louisiana: 23,644 visitors toured the exhibit, learning how astronauts aboard the Space Station live and work in space. Astronauts Ellen Baker, Dan Burbank, Mike Barratt, Piers Sellers and Joe Tanner participated in the exhibit's tour by signing autographs, speaking with children, giving presentations and serving as media spokespersons. In addition to astronaut participation, numerous JSC employees provided tours through the exhibit, answering questions on various topics and serving as ambassadors for NASA.

These community outreach and educational activities were publicized through many of the region's major media outlets. Ten television stations, 140 radio stations, six newspapers and numerous Web sites covered the events, conveying the message to millions of people that NASA considers the people of East Texas and western Louisiana a part of the NASA family.



The International Space Station Trailers Exhibit, "Space Station Imagination," was visited by more than 23,000 visitors during its East Texas and Western Louisiana tour.

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jsc2004e00077 Photo by David DeHoyos