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National Day of Excellence, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On January 28, 1986, America lost a great flagship, the Space Shuttle Challenger. Our Nation united in grief for the valiant crew and their families and in renewed resolve to move ahead with the peaceful exploration of space.

Our space program, and the scientists, engineers, and astronauts who have made it possible, symbolize the spirit of America: optimism and ingenuity, daring and determination. Their achievements have been an inspiration and a source of national pride. We admire the brilliance, the courage, and the hard work that have contributed to our country's preeminence in space.

Space exploration and the advanced technology that drives it benefit our laboratories, our industries, our farms, our hospitals, and our homes. This great adventure has enlarged our vision. Going outside our world we have come to know our own planet better—yes, and to love it as a tiny oasis of life in the engulfing vastness and silence of space. Our space program has given us a new confidence in what the future holds. We have seen expanded opportunities for scientific study, for industrial and commercial growth, for security, and for discovery.

We owe an immense debt of gratitude to our space pioneers—especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The crew of the Challenger—Michael J. Smith, Francis R. Scobee, Gregory B. Jarvis, Ronald E. McNair, Judith A. Resnik, Ellison S. Onizuka, and S. Christa McAuliffe—set a high standard in education and training, in skill and courage. We can offer them no finer tribute than a pledge from each of us to strive for excellence in whatever we do—to extend our grasp by reaching beyond it. For they have taught us that the sky is not the limit—not for Americans.

The Congress, by Public Law 99-478, has designated January 28, 1987, as a "National Day of Excellence" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim January 28, 1987, as the National Day of Excellence. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-sixth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan