

PRESS RELEASE
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For Immediate Release
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Discovery Crew Members at Cosmosphere ***Celebrating 25 Year Anniversary of Maiden Flight***

On August 22, the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center is celebrating the 25th anniversary of STS-41-D, the first mission for the space shuttle Discovery, which is the oldest orbiter in NASA's fleet.

To honor this milestone, most of the surviving astronauts from that mission are scheduled to be at the Cosmosphere for a roundtable discussion at 2 p.m. that afternoon including Mission Specialist Steven Hawley, Kansas native and current professor of Astronomy and Physics at the University of Kansas, Payload Specialist Charles Walker, currently with McDonnell Douglas, Commander Henry Hartsfield Jr. and Pilot Michael Coats, Director of Johnson Space Center. It is free and open to the public.

Following the presentation they will sign autographs from 3 - 4:30, and then attend a reception with Cosmosphere Premium members at 5 p.m. Of note, the attendance of Michael Coats is dependent upon shuttle launch operations based on his responsibilities as Director of Johnson Space Center

The launch of Discovery on August 30, 1984, was the 12th shuttle mission. Discovery was the third orbiter built and the lightest one because of the thermal blanket material used. The launch had been delayed for two months, causing cancellation of another mission scheduled after it. The payload from that mission was included on the STS-41-D mission, bringing the cargo weight up to 47,000 pounds, a shuttle record at that time.

The six-person flight crew consisted of Henry W. Hartsfield Jr., Commander, making his second mission; Pilot Michael L. Coats; three Mission Specialists: - Judith A. Resnik, Richard M. "Mike" Mullane and Steven A. Hawley; and a Payload Specialist, Charles D. Walker, an employee of the McDonnell Douglas Corporation. Walker was the first commercially-sponsored Payload Specialist to fly aboard the shuttle.

The primary cargo was three communications satellites, including the first large communications satellite designed specifically to be deployed from the space shuttle. All three satellites were deployed successfully and became operational.

Another payload was a solar array carrying a number of different types of experimental solar cells. It was extended to its full height several times - the largest structure ever extended from a manned spacecraft. It demonstrated the feasibility of using large lightweight solar arrays in the future, including at the space station.

The STS-41-D mission also included the first use of the IMAX® camera in space. Highlights of the mission were used in the wildly popular movie *The Dream is Alive*. The mission lasted 6 days, 56 minutes, returning on September 5, having traveled 2.21 million miles.

The Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing patrons' knowledge of space exploration. Educating people from around the globe, the Cosmosphere boasts the Hall of Space museum, one of the most significant collections of U.S. and Russian space artifacts in the world; the Justice Planetarium, a dome-shaped classroom where attendees learn about astronomy; Dr. Goddard's Lab, a live demonstration of early rocket technology; the Carey IMAX® Dome Theater, the 12th IMAX® theater built in the world; and summer astronaut training camps. For more information visit www.cosmo.org.

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