U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame® to Welcome Michael Foale and Ellen Ochoa

Space Shuttle Astronauts to be Inducted at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in May 2017

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (PRWEB) February 15, 2017 -- Veteran astronauts Dr. Michael Foale and Dr. Ellen Ochoa, who have both demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in furthering NASA’s mission of exploration and discovery, have been selected to receive one of the highest honors in their industry. This May, they will be inducted into the United States Astronaut Hall of Fame® to become two of only 95 individuals to ever receive this esteemed honor. The announcement was made today at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex by Dan Brandenstein, board chairman of the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation, which oversees the selection process.

An official ceremony and gala will take place at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex on May 19-20, 2017. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the newly relocated and re-designed United States Astronaut Hall of Fame within the new Heroes & Legends attraction, the ceremony will be attended by a roster of astronaut legends.

“The courage, dedication and passionate spirit exhibited by both Dr.’s Foale and Ochoa is indicative of the extraordinary individuals who have been recognized in this way,” said Brandenstein. “NASA’s mission is always expanding with a goal to learn more and go further. Our two new U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame inductees have been pivotal in keeping that mission on course.”

Dr. Foale was selected as an astronaut candidate in 1987 and later was named mission specialist on three of his six space shuttle missions. During STS-84, Dr. Foale remained aboard Mir and used his expertise in physics to help re-establish the Russian Space Station after a collision with the Russian Progress resupply vehicle (M-34). His other mission highlights include: conducting numerous experiments with ATLAS 1 & 2, performing four space walks, an emergency repair of the Hubble Space Telescope and launching on Soyuz TMA-3 to later command Expedition 8. Dr. Foale has become the only American citizen to have served on both Mir and the International Space Station (ISS). During his NASA career, he became Chief of the Soyuz Branch at Johnson Space Center supporting Soyuz and International Space Station operations. When he retired in 2013, Dr. Foale initially set out to develop an electric aircraft, but has moved on to applying machine learning to aerospace systems.

Currently serving as the 11th director of the Johnson Space Center, Dr. Ochoa carries the distinction of having been the first Hispanic woman to go to space aboard STS-56. After becoming a United States astronaut in 1991, Ochoa served as a mission specialist on four space shuttle flights and as payload commander on one of those missions. She applied her extensive robotics training when she operated the Remote Manipulator System (RMS) to deploy and capture the Spartan satellite on STS-56. She again used the RMS on her next mission, STS-66, to retrieve the CRISTA-SPAS satellite at the end of its eight-day flight. While docked at the International Space Station (ISS) on STS-96, Dr. Ochoa operated the RMS for a third time on an eight-hour spacewalk. Her technical skills came to great use aboard the ISS during STS-110 when the station’s robotic arm was used to maneuver spacewalkers around the station for the first time. She also served as flight engineer for STS-96 and 110.

The U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame was spearheaded more than 30 years ago by the founders of the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation, the six surviving Mercury 7 astronauts, with the goal of helping university students pursue their dreams in science, technology, engineering and math. Since that time, the Foundation has awarded
more than $4 million in merit-based scholarships to more than 400 brilliant students. In November 2016, a new U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame opened at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, as part of the new Heroes & Legends attraction.

U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame Induction Process and Eligibility
Each year, inductees are selected by a committee of Hall of Fame astronauts, former NASA officials, flight directors, historians and journalists. The process is administered by the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation. To be eligible, an astronaut must have made his or her first flight at least 17 years before the induction. Candidates must be a U.S. citizen and a NASA-trained commander, pilot or mission specialist who has orbited the earth at least once.

Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex brings to life the epic story of the U.S. space program, offering a full day or more of fun, inspiration and educational activities, including its newest attraction, Heroes & Legends, featuring the U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame®, presented by Boeing, which opened November 11, 2016. Other highlights include the Kennedy Space Center Tour featuring the Apollo/Saturn V Center with an actual Saturn V moon rocket, Space Shuttle Atlantis®, Shuttle Launch Experience®, IMAX® A Beautiful Planet 3D and Journey To Space 3D films, Astronaut Encounter, Journey To Mars: Explorers Wanted, Science on a Sphere®, Rocket Garden, Cosmic Quest, and many other exhibits. Only 45 minutes from Orlando, Fla., Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex opens daily at 9 a.m. with closing times varying by season. Admission is $50 + tax for adults and $40 + tax for children ages 3 – 11. Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex offers annual passes starting at $75 + tax for adults and $60 + tax for children ages 3 – 11. For more information, call 877-313-2610 or visit www.KennedySpaceCenter.com.

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