



As we all know, the final journey into the heavens by the Shuttle program, STS-135, “Atlantis” launching on July 8, returning to earth on July 21, rolled to a full stop at 4:57am, thus ending the Shuttle program after 30 years of imagination, effort and execution by Johnson Space Center and NASA. Recognizing the historical enormity of the final landing, Commander Chris Ferguson just after wheels stop said “Mission complete, Houston. After serving the world for over 30 years, the shuttle has earned its place in history, and it has come to a final stop.” to which Entry CAPCOM Barry Wilmore replied “We congratulate you, Atlantis, as well as the thousands of passionate individuals across this great space faring nation who truly empowered this incredible spacecraft which has inspired millions around the globe.”

Many Rotarians around the world, across America, in Houston, our Clear Lake area and more specifically, as members of Space Center Rotary Club, have contributed to the success of the historically project. Space Center Rotarians include Alan Wylie, Dick Meyers, Gary Johnson, Geoff Atwater, Philip Harris and many more. Congratulations to each of you for a job well done.

Only four astronauts were assigned to this mission, versus the normal six or seven, because there were no other Space Shuttles available for a rescue after the retirement of Discovery and Endeavour. If the shuttle was seriously damaged in orbit, the crew would have moved into the International Space Station and returned, one at a time over the course of a year, in Russian Soyuz capsules.

“Over the course of more than 30 years, we want to salute the entire astronaut corps, for their dedication, not only for our expanded knowledge of our universe, but for the improvements you have contributed to our earth God Speed”

“That is the most graceful, beautiful vehicle we’ve had to fly in space, ever, and it’s going to be a long time until you see a vehicle roll out to the pad that looks as beautiful as that,” STS-135 Flight engineer Rex Walheim said. “How can you beat that? An airplane on the side of a rocket. It’s absolutely stunning.”

“On an evening that is draped in emotion and steeped in history, down the hallowed halls of Mission Control here in Houston, this is likely the final shift in the history of space shuttle program.” - NASA commentator Rob Navias, on the live-streamed coverage of shuttle Atlantis' landing.

“You all did a great job! This is the best video – as an industry employee, my job will be over with the Shuttle Retirement like so many others, but the music, the video, it was perfect. Pulls at the heartstrings and gives us pride in our Space Program and our country! Great job everyone!” “Elvis has left the building,” said a NASA employee, as the last astronaut left Atlantis' flight.