



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NWT Diamond To Launch on Space Shuttle

The Legendary Sky Project Set to Reach New Heights

(YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES) A diamond from the Northwest Territories will launch into space and into history this month when Canadian Space Agency Astronaut Julie Payette flies aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* on Mission STS-127, scheduled for liftoff on June 13.

The Legendary Sky Diamond will be part of the Official Flight Kit on Payette's 16-day mission and will return to Earth as a new symbol of northern sky knowledge and heritage.

"It is a legendary way to launch a legendary project," says Astronomy North President James Pugsley, who refers to the diamond as an educational treasure. "We are thrilled to include this diamond in The Legendary Sky Project because it presents exciting new opportunities for students to learn about the nature and culture of Canada's northern sky."

The Legendary Sky Project is an Astronomy North education and outreach initiative dedicated to the collection and preservation of northern sky knowledge and heritage in the Northwest Territories. As part of the project, The Legendary Sky Diamond will be used to tell the story of diamonds on Earth and diamonds found elsewhere in the Universe.

"Our goal is to introduce students to the ancient history of Earth, the geology of our solar system, and to the frontiers of space exploration using a tiny stone found in their own backyard," Pugsley adds.

Prior to making its journey to the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, the diamond was engraved with the Space Shuttle mission number and the terrestrial coordinates of its point of discovery, the De Beers Snap Lake Mine near Yellowknife. De Beers Canada generously donated, engraved and certified the diamond in support of Astronomy North's latest educational endeavour.

"We are proud to support this project and the efforts of Astronomy North during the International Year of Astronomy," says Cathie Bolstad, Director of External and Corporate Affairs with De Beers Canada. "This is an outstanding educational opportunity that will help northerners rediscover the sky for years to come."

Upon completion of the mission, the diamond will be returned to Yellowknife and donated by Astronomy North to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre at the opening ceremonies of The Legendary Sky Exhibit, a travelling exhibit that celebrates the nature, culture and wonder of Canada's northern sky.

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For more information:

Media Contact:
James Pugsley
(867) 669-0863
info@astronomynorth.com