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Last Updated: 05/23/2023



National Day of Excellence, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Theodore Roosevelt once said: "The foundation stone of national life is and ever must be the individual character of the individual citizen." Nowhere has that fact been better demonstrated than in our national quest for excellence, which has spurred Americans to strive to live up to the highest ideals of our nature and our heritage.

For three decades, that quest has been best symbolized by the magnificent achievements of our space program. The program has proved beyond a doubt that, with will and resolve, Americans can draw upon the insights and inventions of generations past and accomplish great things. In striving for excellence in space, we have expanded the horizon of human potential, brought countless scientific and economic benefits back to Earth, and demonstrated to ourselves and to the world our national vitality, courage, and imagination.

Through the years, the space program has had brilliant successes—but also some disheartening setbacks. On January 28, 1988, the second anniversary of the Space Shuttle CHALLENGER accident, we remember CHALLENGER's courageous crew and other space pioneers who made the supreme sacrifice in the pursuit of excellence—in technology, in goals, in achievement, and in their personal lives.

Their sacrifice was not in vain. For they taught us, above all, that our national quest for excellence must never end if we are to remain a great nation.

When the space shuttle is launched again, the world will know that, once again, the United States is back in space—ready to accept its boundless challenges and eager to pursue its countless opportunities. With the shuttle, we will move toward our next logical step—building and operating a permanently manned space station.

To recognize the importance of space to our future and to honor our space pioneers, especially those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of excellence, the Congress, by Public Law 100-190, has designated January 28, 1988, as a "National Day of Excellence" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim January 28, 1988, as a National Day of Excellence. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to pursue, in the course of their regular activities, the spirit of excellence represented by the crew of the CHALLENGER.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of December, 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 twelfth.

Ronald Reagan