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**Former Astronaut Lousma to Give Presentation at the**

 **Grand Rapids Public Museum in Partnership with the**

**Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association**

**Grand Rapids, MI** – The Grand Rapids Public Museum (GRPM) and the Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association (GRAAA) welcome former astronaut Marine Colonel (ret) Jack Lousma back to the GRPM on May 3 and 4 to honor the memory of Roger B. Chaffee 50 years after the tragic Apollo 1 fire.

Marine Colonel (ret) Jack Lousma is a legendary pioneering NASA astronaut from the 1970s and early 1980s. Lousma gave the rededication address for the re-opening of the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium during the Grand Rapids Public Museum’s Van Andel Museum Center dedication in November 1994.

On Wednesday, May 3, Lousma will present a free public presentation in Museum’s Meijer Theater at 7:30 p.m. entitled *Flying in Space, A Ride on the Good Ship Columbia.* This presentation will show video taken during the actual launch and throughout the week long orbital mission of STS-3 in 1982. Lousma will narrate the video and talk about his experiences aboard Skylab and as the voice of CAPCOM during the tense moments following the Apollo 13 systems failure. For more information, visit grpm.org.

Lousma will also be speaking at the Roger B. Chaffee Scholarship to honor the 50th year recipient of the prestigious award on Thursday, May 4. This year the scholarship will honor Northville High School senior Eric Pearson.

The Roger B. Chaffee Scholarship was established in 1967 by Chaffee’s friends and fellow graduates of Central High School. It is awarded annually to an outstanding Kent County graduate planning to pursue a career in science or mathematics. As keynote speaker, Lousma will recount his remembrances of the challenges Chaffee and other astronauts faced, as well as the sacrifices some made, as the U.S. pursued a thrust into space during the 60’s, 70’s and 80’s. For more information, visit rogerbchaffeescholarship.org. For reservations, please contact David Pequet, Scholarship Director at 800.237.0939.

**Jack Lousma**

In 1973, Lousma became one of the nation’s first space residents aboard the Skylab orbiting laboratory, where he spent 59 days. He spent 11 hours making multiple “space walks” to make repairs incurred during launch. Then, in 1982, he commanded the third flight of a Space Shuttle, a program still in its experimental infancy.

Lousma is best remembered in space lore as the voice responding “This is Houston, say again please” to Apollo 13 astronaut Jack Swigert’s statement: “Houston, we’ve had a problem here” in April of 1970. An oxygen tank explosion had just occurred aboard the capsule carrying three astronauts toward the moon, resulting in a potentially catastrophic power failure. Lousma’s calm and controlled instructions during the dark hours that followed was one of the factors that brought the Apollo 13 crew safely home.

Since retirement in 1983, Lousma has been active in space related activities and high tech businesses. He resided in Ann Arbor for many years before moving to Texas in 2013.

**Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association**

The Grand Rapids Amateur Astronomical Association is a non-profit educational and scientific organization dedicated to advancing the study of astronomy and promoting astronomy and science education to the community. Located at the Veen Observatory in Lowell, MI, the GRAAA is an organization that offers information, guidance and memberships for anyone who is interested in astronomy. Visit graaa.org for more information.

**Grand Rapids Public Museum**

The Grand Rapids Public Museum is an invaluable, publicly-owned institution that is home to more than 250,000 unique artifacts that tell the history of Kent County and beyond, houses the only planetarium in the region, and is responsible for protecting the Norton Indian Mounds, a national historic landmark. The Grand Rapids Public Museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, with its main location in downtown Grand Rapids, MI at 272 Pearl Street, NW. For additional information including hours of operation, admission fees and exhibit/event listings, please visit [www.grpm.org](http://www.grpm.org/).

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