

# A TRIBUTE TO SPACE SHUTTLE COLUMBIA

By Joanna Woerner and Mike Jerauld

Rocketry is defined as the science and technology of rocket design, construction, and flight. Over the years Rocketry has taken on many forms. Whether it be a youngster receiving his or her first rocket kit or the space program when mankind has explored space and walked on the Moon, our country has an unquenched thirst for the pursuit of Rocketry.

From the time that each of us launched our first rocket and experienced that excitement, until today, we have witnessed outstanding achievements in Rocketry. Surely the greatest of these has been our NASA space program. Many of us grew up watching the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo programs. How we all dreamt of what it would be like to fly in space. Over the last two decades the Shuttle Program has brought the pursuit of spaceflight to the forefront both in technological marvels and unparalleled tragedies. We will always remember what we were doing when we heard the unfortunate news of the Space Shuttle Columbia on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003.

As rocketeers, this tragic event again touched the inner fabric of our souls and reminded us of how precious life is. These seven astronauts lived the life that so many of us could only dream about . . . To be lifted into space by a rocket equal in height to the Empire State Building, that has boosters that are powered by the same propellant we use, to feel pure adrenalin coursing through the veins during lift off, and to experience the ultimate achievement: Space Exploration.

Columbia and her crew, we salute you. Godspeed

The rocketry community of San Diego will forever remember the seven Columbia astronauts for their unprecedented valor and dedication to the space program.

**Rick D. Husband, Commander**

**William C. McCool, Pilot**

**Michael P. Anderson, Payload Commander**

**David M. Brown, Mission Specialist 1**

**Kalpana Chawla, Mission Specialist 2**

**Laurel Blair Salton Clark, Mission Specialist 4**

**Ilan Ramon, Payload Specialist 1**