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Michael Curie
Headquarters, Washington
202-358-1100
michael.curie@nasa.gov

Jan. 4, 2010

Victor Scott
Johnson Space Center, Houston
281-483-5111
victor.j.scott@nasa.gov

RELEASE : 10-004

Moon Rock Gains Traveling Companion for Historic Return to Space

HOUSTON -- A moon rock collected during the historic Apollo 11 mission more than 40 years ago will be heading back to space and a new home aboard the International Space Station, sharing quarters with a piece of Mt. Everest.

On May 20, 2009, former NASA astronaut Scott Parazynski carried the rock to the top of Mt. Everest where he collected a rock from the world's highest mountain to accompany the lunar sample for its return to space.

During an event Jan. 6 at Space Center Houston, Parazynski will present both rocks to NASA astronaut and STS-130 mission Commander George Zamka. Zamka will deliver the rocks to the space station during space shuttle Endeavour's mission next month.

Collected from the Sea of Tranquility on the lunar surface, the moon rock and its Mt. Everest companion will be displayed inside the station's Tranquility module, which the STS-130 crew will deliver to the station.

During the presentation, Parazynski will share the story of his journey to the top of the world and what inspired him to carry along the lunar sample, followed by an audience question and answer session. The event is scheduled from 11 a.m. to noon CST in the Blast Off Theater in the Mission Status Center at Space Center Houston. NASA Television will air a recording of the event at 3:30 p.m.

Parazynski and Zamka will be available for interviews from noon to 12:30 p.m. Reporters interested in attending should contact Victor Scott at 281-483-4942 or via e-mail at:

victor.j.scott@nasa.gov

Updates, photos and videos during the presentation will be posted on NASA's Johnson Space Center Twitter feed and can be followed using the hashtag #moon_everest. From 12:30 to 1 p.m., Parazynski will answer questions live via Twitter. To follow Johnson on Twitter, visit:

http://www.twitter.com/NASA_Johnson

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<http://www.nasa.gov>

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