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Stephanie Schierholz
Headquarters, Washington
202-358-4997
stephanie.schierholz@nasa.gov

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Jennifer Knotts
Johnson Space Center, Houston
281-792-7671
norma.j.knotts@nasa.gov

Greg Marshall
Rice University, Houston
713-348-6774
greg.marshall@rice.edu

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NASA Honors JFK with Moon Rock to be Displayed at Rice University

WASHINGTON -- On the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing on the moon, NASA honored President John F. Kennedy with an Ambassador of Exploration Award for his vision and leadership in landing a man on the moon. The Kennedy family has selected Rice University to house and publicly display the award, a lunar sample, at Fondren

Library. Kennedy called for a national initiative to go to the moon during a speech given at Rice University on Sept. 12, 1962.

Michael Coats, a former astronaut and director of NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, will present the moon rock to Rice University President David Leebron on Saturday, Oct. 10, during a halftime ceremony at the Rice versus Navy football game. NASA astronauts George Zamka, a graduate of the Naval Academy, and Danny Olivas, a graduate of Rice, will serve as honorary captains for their alma maters during the game's coin toss.

Game-day attendees can see and touch a moon rock and learn about the space shuttle, International Space Station and future exploration programs by visiting the agency's "Driven to Explore" exhibit. The exhibit will be open from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. CDT at the stadium's Tailgate Owley outside Rice Stadium Gate 3. Zamka and Olivas will sign autographs from 1 to 2 p.m. at the NASA exhibit.

NASA is giving the Ambassador of Exploration Award to the first generation of explorers in the Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space programs for realizing America's goal of going to the moon. The award is a moon rock encased in Lucite, mounted for public display. The rock is part of the 842 pounds of lunar samples collected during six Apollo expeditions from 1969 to 1972.

NASA Television will air a video file with highlights following the event. For NASA TV downlink, schedule and streaming video information, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/ntv>

For a transcript, video and audio of Kennedy's historic speech, visit:

<http://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/ricetalk.htm>

For information about and pictures of the NASA Ambassador of Exploration Award, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/AofEphotos.html>

For more information about Rice University, visit:

<http://www.rice.edu>

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