

FOR A NATIONAL SPACE DAY

A Tribute to Astronaut John Glenn, 1921-2016

by Kesha Rogers

As our knowledge of the Universe in which we live increases, may God grant us the wisdom and guidance to use it wisely.

—John Glenn

Dec. 13—I am Kesha Rogers, a former Candidate for U.S. Senate and former Democratic Nominee for the U.S. House of Representatives.

I wish to honor and pay tribute to a great American Hero and Inspiration to the people of this nation, and to many around the world, former Senator and astronaut John Glenn. He died last week, on December 8, 2016.

John Glenn's passing had a profound impact on me, as he died just one day before my 40th birthday. He had been 40 years old when he led the nation to new heights in the conquest of space, being the first American to orbit the Earth, orbiting three times in a nearly five-hour mission. I reflected on his great contributions and his commitment to human progress in the exploration of space. He brought great inspiration to young people around the world and set the nation on a course for the Moon and the opening into space beyond it.

He has gone on to eternally fulfill mankind's extra-terrestrial imperative out there somewhere in the Galaxy, or perhaps in some other galaxy. His life was an inspiration to all mankind.

Glenn was one of the chosen seven in the original class of astronauts announced to the world on April 9,



NASA

Astronaut John Glenn

1959; the first to orbit Earth; and the last survivor of the seven. He orbited the Earth three times on February 20, 1962 aboard the *Friendship 7* spacecraft. He was the fifth human in space and the third American. Glenn's mission was truly instrumental in paving the way to achieving the vision of President John F. Kennedy when Kennedy spoke before a joint session of Congress on May 25, 1961 and declared, "I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before the decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth." It was John

Glenn's mission aboard the *Friendship 7* just nine months later that set the nation on course to achieving that goal.

Eight years later, on July 20, 1969, Americans set foot on the surface of the Moon, dedicating their mission to the world with the words, "we came in peace for all mankind."

Although Glenn left his career as an astronaut to serve in the United States Senate for 25 years representing the state of Ohio, beginning in 1974, he never lost his passion for mankind's advance into space. He returned to space in 1998 when he flew in Space Shuttle *Discovery*, the year before he retired from the United States Senate at the age of 77.

Space Launches Development

As we recommit ourselves today to human creative progress, we must restore our national mission for the exploration of space through international cooperation. We must acknowledge mankind's extraterrestrial imperative and recommit ourselves to acting on that principle, to discover and develop the universe. We have a common destiny: All nations must come together to fulfill the mission of developing all mankind.

In an address he gave just a few years ago, astronaut John Glenn prayed that wisdom and guidance be granted by God as mankind's knowledge of the universe increases. He asked, "As our knowledge of the universe in which we live increases, may God grant us the wisdom and guidance to use it wisely."

In his three philosophical laws of astronautics, space pioneer Krafft Ehricke—who would have reached his one hundredth birthday next March—expressed the thought that we are following God's guidance in acting on our extraterrestrial imperative, a necessary expression of mankind's unlimited creative potential in the universe. Ehricke wrote, "By expanding through the universe, man fulfills his destiny as an element of life endowed with the power of reason and the wisdom of the moral law within himself."

Join me in committing this nation to a new system of international relations, a system dedicated to advancing

the creative potential of every human being on the planet in order to fulfill mankind's imperative in the exploration of space. We must join with Russia and China in the exploration of space for the peace of all mankind. As the chief engineer of China's manned space program recently declared, "Cooperation between major players will be conducive to the development of all mankind." In a recent white paper issued by China's government that is titled, "The Right to Development: China's Philosophy, Practice and Contribution," the intention to foster human creative progress and increase the productivity of all mankind is clear. The paper begins,

Development is a universal human theme, providing for people's basic needs and giving them hope for a better life. The right to development is an inalienable human right, symbolizing dignity and honor ...¹

Implementing that inalienable human right to develop is truly an imperative of all mankind and starts with a new mission of cooperation in the exploration and development of space. This must be our dedication to the future of humanity, as a spacefaring species.

As we remember and honor astronaut and Senator John Glenn, I call on the United States to declare an annual National Space Day in his memory and the memory of all of the great visionaries of space exploration who have passed the torch and paved the way for a new generation of explorers and discoverers. I call on the United States to establish a new commitment to human development in the exploration of space in cooperation with all nations. Lunar villages and settlements on the Moon will express a shared vision—in a new era of space exploration and international cooperation with Russia and China—of the inalienable right to development of all mankind.

1. "The Right to Development: China's Philosophy, Practice and Contribution," issued by the State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, December 1, 2016. The full text: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2016-12/01/c_135873721.htm