

The Bandera PROPHECY

October 18, 2021

Astronaut keynotes Veterans Day celebration

By Susan Junker

Commander, American Legion Post 157

“If you don’t swing, you won’t hit!” is the lifelong guiding motto for the guest speaker at the Nov. 13 Bandera Honors Veterans celebration on the County Courthouse lawn. United States Marine Corps retired Colonel and NASA Astronaut Jack Lousma will provide the keynote address during the 19th annual celebration.

Colonel Lousma is living proof of the success of that motto. He is an aeronautical engineer, retired Marine Corps officer, former naval aviator, NASA Astronaut, and politician. He was a member of the second crew on the Skylab space station in 1973. In 1982, he commanded STS-3, the third Space Shuttle mission. As one of the 19 astronauts selected by NASA in 1966, he first served as a member of the astronaut support crews for the Apollo 9,10 and 13 missions. He was also selected as lunar module pilot for Apollo 20, which was later cancelled with the program closing with Apollo 17. He was the pilot for Skylab 3 for two months in 1973, and was commander on the Space Shuttle Columbia, STS-3, in March 1982, logging over 1,619 hours in space.

This hero of the “Golden Age” of space also spent 11 hours on two spacewalks outside the Skylab space station. From humble beginnings in Michigan in a family with strong work standards and emphasis on strong ethics and responsibility, he graduated from the University of Michigan and was commissioned into the Marine Corps as a means to become a pilot. As he was in training, Astronaut John Glenn circled the earth. Colonel Lousma flew the A-4D Skyhawk and later the RF-8A Crusader and EF-10B for reconnaissance missions. He was one of five Marine

pilots selected for evaluation by NASA and after much testing and training joined that Skylab Space Station “first of a kind” space flights. His post-NASA career continues his “swinging ... and hitting” mantra: leading and advising growing companies, and continuing to contribute to the advancement of aeronautics and education. Colonel Lousma never stopped flying either with a career total of 7,000 hours flight time. He also ran for the U.S. Senate in Michigan nearly unseating the incumbent: a continuation of his “sense of duty and purpose in serving America directly.” His awards and honors throughout his career are numerous and include international recognition. He and his wife reside in Kerrville and enjoy their growing family: last count four children, 16 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Bandera American Legion Post 157 is honored to welcome this distinguished American patriot to the Honors Program on Nov. 13, at 10:30 a.m., at the Bandera County Courthouse, following the viewing of Family and Military displays starting at 9:30 a.m. The program will include the presentation of colors by the Bandera High School Naval JROTC cadets, music by local soloists, the Alkek 5th Grade Choir, and the San Antonio Pipes & Drums.

Everyone is invited to the program as well as enter and view the parade at noon. The Veterans and Spouses Barbecue will begin at 1 p.m. Contact Gary Hetrick for parade applications at 717-679-4434.