

THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY CONGRATULATES BLUE ORIGIN AND JEFF BEZOS FOR FIRST CREWED FLIGHT OF THE NEW SHEPARD

*Suborbital Tourist Rocket Soars to 63
Miles; Opens New Frontiers*

WASHINGTON, D.C., US, July 20, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After years of development and 15 prior test flights, Jeff Bezos has taken the journey of a lifetime into space. With him were his brother Mark; Oliver Daemen, who replaces the original high bidder for a flight slot; and Wally Funk, one of the "Mercury 13" women who were privately tested for spaceflight during the early years of the Space Race. Daemen, at 18, is the youngest person to fly in space, and Funk, at 82, is the oldest. The [National Space Society](#) is thrilled at this achievement of sending citizens into space.



Touchdown! Blue Origin's New Shepard capsule lands in west Texas this morning. Credit: Blue Origin

Departing Blue Origin's launch site near Van Horn, Texas early on the morning of July 20—not coincidentally the same date as the landing of Apollo 11 some 52 years ago—the New Shepard rocket began an approximately 11-minute flight at about 8:11 am local time. Minutes later, the New Shepard rocket released the capsule, named RSS First Step, and followed an automated landing sequence back to the launch site, leaving the capsule and its passengers to crest a ballistic arc and begin their descent. They experienced weightlessness for about three minutes at the top of their trajectory. Parachutes were released as the craft descended and brought them back to a safe landing.

Along with Richard Branson's record-making flight last week, Bezos's rocket ride has made history. While both flights were similar to missions from the 1960s—Branson's similar to the X-15

flight profile and Bezos's closer to that of Alan Shepard's Mercury flight in 1961 (for which Bezos's program and rocket are named)—both represent a significant milestone in opening spaceflight to regular citizens. Whether they are called space tourists or citizen astronauts is immaterial—the real value is the beginning of a larger expansion of humanity into space.

“The National Space Society is celebrating today's flight of Blue Origin's New Shepard,” said Anita Gale, CEO of the NSS. “This marks a second remarkable achievement in private spaceflight in as many weeks, and we are thrilled to see the final frontier opening to the rest of us. This is the beginning of the larger space infrastructure Jeff Bezos has spoken about for decades.”



Jeff Bezos with the New Shepard during early testing. Credit: Blue Origin

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Michelle Hanlon, President of the NSS, added, “It's noteworthy that most of the money raised by auctioning the empty seat on this flight is being donated to organizations like, and including, the National Space Society. Mr. Bezos's generosity is laudable, and we thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his generous gift. This will allow the NSS to accelerate our efforts to assist young people in reaching for space-related careers. Huge congratulations to Blue Origin's New Shepard team and Jeff Bezos!”

This flight marks the 16th for the New Shepard rocket and more are expected to follow very shortly, with Blue Origin suggesting routine revenue flights should occur later in 2021. These new commercial spaceflight efforts are early steps toward settling the final frontier as outlined in the NSS's [Roadmap to Space Settlement](#).

“This launch, as well as those preceding and following it, clearly demonstrates the value proposition of innovation, agility, and commercial activities towards advancing humanity into space,” said Karlton Johnson, Chairman of the NSS Board of Governors. “Blue Origin's donation to NSS's STEM efforts will ignite future generations to take us farther and higher than ever.”

The National Space Society was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute,

founded to promote citizen support for the American space program, and the L5 Society, based on the work of space settlement pioneer Gerard K. O'Neill. The NSS is the preeminent citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement. For more information go to space.nss.org.

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