

Kraft, Christopher, and Armstrong, Neil, Collection

Christopher Kraft and Neil Armstrong Collection

1986



Title Statement

Kraft, Christopher, and Armstrong, Neil, CollectionChristopher Kraft and Neil Armstrong Collection, 1986
Ms.2024.064

Author: Kat Zinn, Archivist

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specref@vt.edu
URL: <http://spec.lib.vt.edu>



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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

Ms.2024.064

Unit Date

1986

Language

Materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract

This collection consists of two signed event programs made out to Sheila D. Johnston. One, signed by VT alum and NASA administrator Christopher Kraft, is for the opening of the Christopher C. Kraft, Jr. Collection at Virginia Tech Special Collections in Newman Library in 1986. The other is the Virginia Tech 114th Annual Commencement program, signed by astronaut Neil Armstrong, who spoke at the ceremony in 1986.

Creator

Kraft, Christopher C. (Christopher Columbus), 1924-2019

Creator

Armstrong, Neil, 1930-2012

Extent

0.1 Cubic Feet 1 folder

Repository

Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia Tech

Administrative Information

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Source of Acquisition

This collection was donated to Special Collections and University Archives in 2019.

Processing Information

The processing, arrangement, and description of the Christopher Kraft and Neil Armstrong Collection was completed in June 2024.

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Preferred Citation

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Biographical Note - Christopher Kraft

Christopher Columbus Kraft, Jr., was born on February 28, 1924, in Phoebus, Virginia. He received his BS degree in aeronautical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) in December 1944.

Kraft joined the Langley Aeronautical Laboratory of the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) in 1945 as a flight engineer. In October 1958, he was selected as one of the original members of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Space Task Group, which had been established to manage Project Mercury, the nation's first project to put a man in space. In the early phases of Project Mercury, Kraft was a prime contributor to the development of many of the basic mission and flight control techniques used in manned space flight. He personally served as Flight Director for all the Mercury missions and many of the Gemini missions. During the latter phase of Project Mercury, he directed the design and implementation of the Mission Control Center at the Johnson Space Center (originally the Manned Spacecraft Center) in Houston, from which all of NASA's manned space flights have been conducted. Kraft was named deputy director of the Manned Spacecraft Center in 1970, and later director in 1972. He retired from NASA in 1982 and subsequently served as a consultant for various corporations. In 2001, Kraft's autobiography, *Flight: My Life in Mission Control* was published.

Kraft has been the recipient of a number of awards and honors, including three honorary doctorates (Indiana Institute of Technology, 1966; St. Louis University, 1967; and Villanova University, 1979); the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, 1963; the NASA Distinguished Service Medal, 1969; the American Astronautical Society's Space Flight Award, 1970; and the Ambassador of Exploration Award, 2006. In 2011, the Johnson Space Center renamed its Mission Control Center the Christopher C. Kraft Jr. Mission Control Center in his honor.

Kraft died on July 22, 2019, at the age of 95.

Biographical Note - Neil Armstrong

Neil Armstrong was born on August 5, 1930, in Wapakoneta, Ohio. He received his BS degree in aeronautical engineering from Purdue University in 1955, later earning an MS in aerospace engineering from the University of Southern California. Armstrong served as a naval aviator from 1949-1952.

He joined the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA; later National Aeronautics and Space Administration or NASA) in 1955, serving at High-Speed Flight Station as an aeronautical research scientist and as a pilot until 1962, when he became an astronaut. While Armstrong is best known for being the first person to set foot on the moon, he was also active in piloting and engineering aspects of other projects, such as the X-15 hypersonic rocket plan program. Armstrong left the astronaut corps in 1969 to serve as deputy associate administrator for Aeronautics at NASA Headquarters until 1971. He served as an engineering professor at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio from 1971 until 1979, becoming chairman for various technology companies until 2000, including Computing Technologies for Aviation, Inc., Eaton Corp., AIL Systems Inc., and EDO Corp. Simultaneously, Armstrong served on the National Commission on Space from 1985-1986 and acted as vice-chairman of the space shuttle Challenger disaster investigation committee in 1986.

Armstrong has received many honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, 1969; the Robert J. Collier Trophy, 1969; the Robert H. Goddard Memorial Trophy, 1970; the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, 1978; and decorations from 17 countries.

Armstrong died on August 25, 2012, at the age of 82.

External Sources:

"Neil A. Armstrong," NASA, <https://www.nasa.gov/people/neil-a-armstrong/>, accessed June 5, 2024.

"Neil Armstrong," Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Neil-Armstrong>, accessed June 5, 2024.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of two signed event programs made out to Sheila D. Johnston. One, signed by VT alum and NASA administrator Christopher Kraft, is for the opening of the Christopher C. Kraft, Jr. Collection at Virginia Tech Special Collections in Newman Library in 1986. The other is the Virginia Tech 114th Annual Commencement program, signed by astronaut Neil Armstrong, who spoke at the ceremony in 1986.

Related Archival Material

See the following related materials, which are also at Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives:

Christopher C. Kraft Papers, Ms1985-001

Christopher Kraft Letter to Elizabeth Plank, Ms2024-065

Keywords

Archives of American Aerospace Exploration (AAAE)

University Archives

University History

Astronauts

Space vehicles -- Landing -- Moon

United States -- National Aeronautics and Space Administration -- Officials and employees

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Description of Subordinate Components

Collection Opening Program Autographed by Christopher Kraft

Unit Date 1986-04-11

folder 1

Commencement Program Autographed by Neil Armstrong

Unit Date 1986-06-14

folder 1