



the **World** remembers.....

20th Anniversary

January 28, 2006

January 28, 1986...“On the morning of the launch, the weather was freezing cold. We looked out at a clean blue sky that served as a magnificent backdrop to what appeared to be, from a distance, a small replica of the greater-sized shuttle. It glistened in the light, all white and sparkling, perhaps because of the bright Florida sun and the ice that hung from the platform, launch pad, and shuttle...”

“That morning, riding out on the chilly bus...I prayed for us all – for our loved ones waiting to be launched, for those of us waiting to watch the launch, for our children, for the children around the world waiting for lessons to be taught from the classroom in space...”

“When we arrived at the launch Control Center, the families departed the buses and were escorted into the offices that were traditionally set aside for the immediate families of the crew...We looked out the window. We watched the TV news announcers, the NASA select channel, and our children...”

“We all waited. The clock ticked away each moment as though it carried a heavy burden. Finally, the long-awaited countdown began. We picked up the babies and cameras and climbed the stairs to the rooftop viewing area...”

“We cheered as the solid rocket boosters ignited, and the shuttle carrying its precious cargo lifted off the pad. Only a few anxious moments were left...”

“We watched in silence as our loved ones climbed the sky sunward. Their craft from the distance seemed to sit atop a great flume of smoke. The floor shook with the sheer raw power of the million pounds of thrust...”

Then....“it happened! The unspeakable happened. Standing there together, watching with all the world, we saw the shuttle rip apart. The SRBs went screaming off on their own separate paths, the orbiter with our loved ones exploded in the cold blue sky, like our hearts it shattered into a million pieces.”

“In stunned silence, we looked to each other...for answers, for information, for hope?...”

Excerpts from *Silver Linings, Triumph of the Challenger 7*, by June Scobee Rodgers .

That day, hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren and citizens were watching with anticipation the launch of this “Teacher in Space” mission that had captured the excitement and awe of the nation only to see a major space tragedy before their eyes. It was truly a sad day in history. But with determination and vision, the Challenger families turned this tragedy into a monumental educational opportunity for children and adults alike.

INSPIRING. EXPLORING. LEARNING. IT'S OUR MISSION.