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STAFFORD IS WEATHERFORD'S HERO

By Kevin Coy



The monument also commemorates the meeting of Americans and Soviets

in space through the Apollo-Soyuz mission, completed on July 24, 1975

and under the command of Lt. General Stafford.

Every generation will have its heroes. Every city, area, or community has its pride and joy in a famous person. These heroes live out their towns' dreams and bring recognition to otherwise unnoticed communities. Thomas P. Stafford is such a hero for Weatherford. His achievements have brought popularity and fame to this small town. Weatherford rejoices in Tom Stafford and the things he has attempted. He gained his status by accomplishing superior goals.

Stafford's first attainment, although not a major feat, was to break the stereotypic mold of Oklahomans. Many people in our nation perceive our state's citizens as

uneducated farmers. Our education system has long been frowned upon. General Stafford shattered this image by displaying a vivacious personality as well as by being highly educated. His skills of leadership and decision-making contributed to his success. Will Rogers has been the only other Oklahoman to gain such popularity. Men such as these should give our citizens hope, and a feeling of pride should be taken because of Mr. Stafford's accomplishments—pride not only in his personal success but for the national attention he has brought to his town and state.

Besides his mold cracking, General Stafford has proved to be a triumphant diplomat. His

communication and alliance with the Soviets have produced history-making news. He was an important instrument in getting the mission together and arranged with the Soviet Union. Stafford was very masterful with the hook-up that took place in space. General Stafford, when giving his acceptance speech on June 20, 1988, for the memorial statue, said that he had just visited his soviet friends'.

home towns where they were being recognized as heroes just as he was. Not only has General Stafford made outer space connections but also personal friendly ties that have carried on through his lifetime. It may well be that the mission that he was involved in could have been the initiation of improved Soviet-American relationships. General Stafford has set a good example for our nation by relating to and accepting his Soviet friends for who they are and what they believe in.

Tom Stafford has brought Oklahoma recognition and also has displayed his diplomatic skills. He has also experienced a rare human event in traveling into space. Only a

handful of men have ever had the opportunity to encounter such an incident. All of these men must be extremely gifted in knowledge, leadership, adventure, and—most of all—courage. General Thomas P. Stafford has all these qualities and can be respected as a man with a purpose and a vision to accomplish difficult and far-reaching goals. He has made history as an American astronaut and as a faithful servant to the United States of America. One small step for Thomas P. Stafford has been a giant step for this state, this nation, and possibly this world.

General Stafford has attained outstanding feats in his lifetime. He has been an inspiration to this state

as well as this nation. He should be placed on the list of heroes that this nation has gathered. History has been made by men like Tom Stafford, who has dared to be different. General Stafford has projected an image of the young American Boy's dream to grow up and be an astronaut. His success has made the common people's dreams a reality. Courage and sight of a long-distance goal are only two things that separate heroes from the norm. ●

KEVIN COY is a sophomore pre-Pharmacy student at SOSU. By his own admission, he is a quiet, shy person and a loyal friend. He has specific goals for his life and feels that he can accomplish them if he applies himself.

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