

Photo Opportunity

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Contacts: Althea Brooks
(434) 243-2379
althea@virginia.edu
Tasha Cherry
(434) 982-2708
tasha@virginia.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Kathy Thornton, Former NASA Astronaut to give free public lecture at the
Virginia Air and Space Center on her personal experiences in space**

Why do we go to space? What do we do there? What will we learn in this environment that will benefit future explorers? Kathy C. Thornton, Professor of Technology, Culture, and Communication, will describe her experiences in space and opportunities for future explorers in her talk “Space Flight: A Human Perspective” at the Virginia Air and Space Center on Friday, October 6, 2006 at 7:00 pm. The lecture is free and open to the public. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Please register online at www.virginia.edu/engagingthemind/ or call toll-free 1-866-UVaOutreach (1-866-882-6887).

Kathy C. Thornton joined the University of Virginia faculty in 1996 as a professor and is now Assistant Dean for Graduate Programs. Prior to the University of Virginia, she served for 12 years as an astronaut, based at the Johnson Space Center, where her duties included participation in space missions as well as a term as head of the Education Working Group. For her work on the Hubble telescope repair project and other missions, she was awarded NASA's Distinguished Service Medal, as well as numerous other honors. Before joining the space program, Dr. Thornton co-authored more than 30 scientific publications and was a staff physicist for the U.S. Army Foreign Science and Technology Center.

About the *Engaging the Mind* lecture series

Coordinated by the UVa Office of the Vice President and Provost in partnership with the Faculty Senate Speakers Bureau and sponsored by Virginia National Bank, the series provides opportunities for people throughout Virginia to engage with UVa's top scholars and teachers in a free public forum. Faculty speakers engage in public conversations with local communities across the state. All lectures are free and open to the public.

Since 2001, over 6,000 people have attended the Engaging the Mind lectures in 12 different cities across Virginia. “Our faculty members really enjoy the opportunity to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences,” said UVa Vice President and Provost Gene Block.

The University of Virginia serves over one million people every year through more than 400 public service and outreach programs. UVa is proud to be part of Virginia’s rich tradition of higher education and aims toward making a vibrant future for all Virginians. From world-class health care and stronger local governments to excellent schools and lifelong learning, UVa values its contribution to communities throughout the Commonwealth. The Office of Public Service and Outreach works to support, promote, and enhance the University of Virginia's commitment to public life.

Audience member testimonials:

- "This lecture was outstanding! I appreciated the language being accessible (as I am not an expert)."
- "I've so enjoyed these events. Learning so much in an evening. Some that influence the way I see things."
- “Quality speaker. Excellent presentation. Overall quality event.”

For additional information on the UVa Engaging the Mind lecture series visit

<http://www.virginia.edu/engagingthemind/>

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