News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Feb. 19, 2007

University of St. Thomas Hosts First Woman Space Shuttle Pilot Eileen Collins

WHAT: The Center for Irish Studies Cultural Outreach Forum and The Irish Society present a lecture given by U.S. Astronaut Eileen Collins. Her lecture is entitled "Return to Flight Mission: Lessons Learned from STS." The *STS-114 Discovery* (July 26-Aug. 9, 2005) was the first "return to flight" mission after the loss of Columbia on Feb. 1, 2003.

WHEN: 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 29, 2007

WHERE: University of St. Thomas
Cullen Hall, 4001 Mt. Vernon
Parking: Moran Center, 3807 Graustark at West Alabama

BACKGROUND: In her presentation, Collins will narrate an 18-minute video and present several still photographs of the earth from space, as well as describe the mission and her experiences as an astronaut.

Collins, retired Irish-American U.S. Air Force Colonel, is the first woman ever selected to be a space shuttle pilot and the first woman to command a space shuttle (*STS-93 Columbia* July 23-27, 1999). Under her command of *STS-114 Discovery*, the shuttle docked with the International Space Station and the crew tested and evaluated new procedures for flight safety as well as shuttle inspection and repair techniques. After a two-week, 5.8 million-mile journey in space, the orbiter and its crew of seven astronauts landed at Edwards Air Force Base.

Collins' family emigrated from the Drimoleague - Drinagh area of West Cork, Ireland, to Pennsylvania in the 1840s. It is notable that the family of another astronaut, Michael Collins who served as command module pilot on *Apollo 11*, July 16-24, 1969, the first lunar landing mission, also came from this region of West Cork.

COST: Free and open to the public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Lori Gallagher at 713-525-3592.

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