

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **ASTRONAUT TO SPEAK AT CELEBRATION RECOGNIZING AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACHIEVEMENT**

**Atlanta, Ga--** Charles F. "Charlie" Bolden, Jr., former NASA astronaut will be the keynote speaker Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006 at the Loudermilk Conference Center. Bolden's appearance is being held in conjunction with the Achievement Week celebration of Omega Psi Fraternity a national organization with more than 100,000 members.

Bolden was selected by NASA as an astronaut in 1980 and earned his shuttle flight wings by flying four missions aboard the space shuttles Columbia, Discovery and Atlantis. Over the course of these four space flights, Bolden logged more than 680 hours in outer space. He assisted in deploying the Hubble space telescope, and commanded the first mission that included a Russian cosmonaut as a mission specialist crew member.

As a naval aviator, Bolden flew more than 100 combat missions in South Asia in the early 1970s. Throughout his career, he has logged more than 7,000 flying hours in more than 30 different fixed and rotary-wing aircraft.

In June of 1994, Bolden left NASA and returned to the operating forces of the U.S. Marine Corps as the deputy commandant of midshipmen at the Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Md. Before retiring in 2003, Bolden had attained the rank of major general and served as the commanding general of the third marine aircraft wing at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, Calif.

Among his military decorations, Bolden has received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Defense Superior Service Medal and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

Omega Psi Phi's achievement Week was originally designed to promote the study of African-American life and history. Achievement Week is observed in November of each year and is designed to seek out and give due recognition to those individuals at the local and international levels who have made a noteworthy contribution toward improving the quality of life for black Americans. Bolden is a member of Omega Psi Phi.

The event is open to the public. Ticket donations of \$30.00 will be accepted at the door.

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