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**NASA Astronaut visits Hawai'i as part of Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Science Day**

**HONOLULU — Feb. 1, 2016** — NASA Astronaut and retired U.S. Air Force Colonel, Edward Michael Fincke travelled to Hilo, Hawai'i as part of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Science Day on Saturday, January 30. The event honors Hawai'i-born Astronaut Ellison Onizuka, whose life was cut short 30 years ago on the Space Shuttle Challenger mission. American Savings Bank (ASB) has been the title sponsor of the *Ellison Onizuka Science Day* for the past 15 years.

Claude Onizuka, Ellison's younger brother and a former ASB branch manager, has led the event that honors his brother's memory. The Astronaut Ellison Onizuka Science Day has welcomed thousands of Hawai'i youth to explore topics in science ranging from satellites to space travel. "My brother once said, 'vision is not limited by what your eye can see, but by what your mind can imagine.' It is my hope that his science day will continue to inspire Hawai'i youth to imagine great opportunities for Hawai'i and the world," said Onizuka. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Challenger mission.

The University of Hawai'i at Hilo once again hosted the event, which welcomes fourth through 12th-grade students from across the state. Students had the opportunity to participate in interactive science-themed workshops, take part in a robotics competition, enjoy a complimentary lunch and meet the astronaut. This week Col. Fincke will also visit with students from Highlands Intermediate School in Pearl City, and Kalakaua Middle School in Kalihi. Both schools are ASB Bank for Education Schools who received special recognition for their participation in the 2015 Bank for Education KeikiCo Business Plan Contest.

Col. Fincke started his space career as the International Space Station science officer and flight engineer on Expedition 9, a six-month mission. He was commander on Expedition 18, a seven-month mission aboard the NASA space station, which hosted the crews of two different space shuttle missions. In May 2011 he served as Mission Specialist on the final flight of Space Shuttle Endeavour, which delivered the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer, a cosmic ray particle physics detector, to the International Space Station. Col. Fincke also served as the commander of the second NASA Extreme Environment Mission Operations mission, living and working underwater for seven days, and was also on the European Space Agency CAVES 2012 crew, spending six days living and working underground in Italian caves. Col. Fincke has accumulated a total of 381 days in space and logged more than 48 hours on nine spacewalks. He has recorded over 1,100 flight hours in more than 30 different aircraft types, and is qualified to fly as a left-seat flight engineer on the Russian Soyuz TM and TMA spacecraft.

(more)



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