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Mr. Charles Foley
Principal
Concord High School
Concord, New Hampshire
United States of America

Robert Cattrysse
90 Lark Street
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June 4, 1986.

Dear Mr. Charles Foley,

I'm 18 years old (since March 11) and I have been interested in space since I was 9 years old, already half my life. I believe I first became fascinated with space one summer (June) day after school in 1977 when I peered at our TV and enjoyed the show "Lost in Space." Since then I have come a long way. The year may have been 1976 but I only have some school papers proving about "Lost in Space" from 1977. In grade 6 I did my first science fair project. With that project called "Our Solar System" I won first. Including that project I've done 7 projects altogether, entered 8 science fairs, and won 8 times. Next year, in grade 13, I'll be doing another project. Ontario has grade 13 for the last year next year. In grade 8 the public school science fair never took place and I was then the only one to do a project and enter it at the Kent County Regional Science Fair. Then I won the science award in grade 8. In high school no one has to do a project. This year I was the only one out of over 1000 students from my school to do one. Last year I was one out of two who did a project. The other one was my brother. I have 40 books on space, and I am subscribed to many space-related magazines. I have scrapbooks on space dating to the

fall of 1980, slides, pictures, audio and video tapes (from August 1981 to August 1984 and August 1984 to the present day, respectively). I also collect Shuttle and other patches, posters, and other items. I am a member of the Chatham-Kent Astronomy Club (CKAC) and I am engaged in their Messier Marathon in which I and other members separately find deep sky objects on telescopes and have them verified. I have a 3-inch reflecting telescope and in a group of the club we are grinding mirrors. I have an 8-inch mirror (actually it is a piece of glass that will become a mirror) to grind for my new telescope. I have attended all the monthly meetings of the club since the first meeting November 15, 1982 and I have written articles in their newsletter Astro-Chat since November of last year. A sample of my articles is enclosed. I've typed the articles myself since the one titled "Triumph and Tragedy." After grade 13 I plan to attend university to study astronomy. One day I want to fly and work and live in space.

I was very shocked by the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion and the death of her seven magnificent astronauts on January 28, 1986. It is indeed a very sad chapter in the American manned space program but they, the Challenger Seven, knew the risks involved yet they still went out to explore that final frontier of human endeavor. They worked toward the future of living permanently in space and we will continue where they left off. They, the pioneers of the space program, the heroes of the heavens, the magnificent Challenger Seven,

will never be forgotten.

My dream is to be an astronomer and work in the weightlessness of space onboard the Space Station. Now that dream is even stronger. When those seven astronauts perished it was like losing seven members of my family. I've watched each flight so closely that I know each mission is different. To me it is not just another Shuttle flight or just another crew. To me it's an opportunity to gain more knowledge on the space program (how to explore and learn even better), the environment of space, and the universe which will aid the human species in the exploration of the cosmos. Exploring can help to tell us who we are. Every Shuttle crew is a group of brave people who want to be a part at pioneering that exploration and I too want to be a part of it. All those astronauts who I watch so closely and admire so much do indeed belong to my family. And so I will never forget those seven: Francis R. "Dick" Scobee, Michael J. Smith, Judith A. Resnik, Ellison S. Onizuka, Ronald E. McNair, Gregory B. Jarvis and Sharon Christa McAuliffe. I will always remember them with pride. The words President Ronald Reagan spoke on that cold last day of January can certainly be applied to me also: "Dick, Mike, Judy, El, Ron, Greg and Christa, your families and your country mourn your passing. We bid you goodbye. We will never forget you."

I will never forget the Challenger and her brave crew.

I've written to many places before and I had already planned to write to Christa after her flight. Before the launch of Challenger from the Kennedy Space Center (KSC)

in Florida I had videotaped news on the Voyager 2 Uranus encounter and then began a new tape which would be long enough to include Christa's lessons from space. Instead the tape recorded the terrible end of Mission 51-L. In the end I did not have enough tape so I started on new ones as the explosion of Challenger ripped through my mind. I would have asked her for an autographed picture and other items and information about her flight and her lessons. She could not teach those lessons but she and her other crew members taught us another one that we will never forget. When we explore space or anywhere else there is always the risk of death. To explore we must not fear death or else we can not explore. Exploration is never risk-free and never will be, just as many of us thought nothing could happen to our space program or our heroic astronauts who are pioneering us to the stars. Their lessons will never be forgotten and neither will those seven star voyagers.

I did not know Christa McAuliffe directly but many astronauts, NASA employees, residents of Concord, and her family, friends and students did. In remembering her I would like to offer my deepest sympathy and condolences to her friends and students at Concord High and her family members. Mr. Foley please tell her family for me that I feel very sorry in the loss of their wonderful daughter. Please tell her family, friends and students to keep reaching for the stars and I offer my best wishes to all those who had to combat the loss of Christa McAuliffe a little more than I had to. Someday I plan to visit the burial sites of

the Challenger Seven or where the ashes of a couple of them have been or have yet to be scattered. I would be so honoured to visit the site of where the remains of Christa now lay.

In the Thursday, February 13, 1986 Detroit Free Press there was a great deal on remembering the Challenger Seven. The last part about Christa McAuliffe reads as follows:

By the time of launching, McAuliffe had made a mark on NASA and felt she had been accepted by the crew. She realized this at a portrait session in Houston, she later told O'Hara (Eileen O'Hara, a friend from Concord). The astronauts told her to wait alone in the next room and she, puzzled, complied. Then they joined her, each wearing a mortarboard with tassel and holding plastic school lunch boxes and apples.

The portrait is now among the memorabilia at Concord High.

I was wondering Mr. Charles Foley if at all possible I would receive this picture (if you have any extras) which I have not yet seen and perhaps any (photocopied) items in remembrance of Christa and the other six Challenger astronauts, such as photocopies of the school's newspaper. I was also wondering if I could receive a photograph of her family and an autographed one of you Mr. Foley. I would be glad to pay for any of this. I would appreciate it very much and I would be forever thankful.

I was also wondering if you could give me a list of universities in the U.S. (and their address) that have astronomy programs or could you please tell me if there is any possible way I could attend university in the U.S. for astronomy. I'd like to go to university in the U.S.

because for one reason the space program in the United States is the best around.

Please tell the people there that I wrote urging them to reach for the stars. I sure hope to hear from you so then I am certain that you have heard from me. Thank you very much in advance for everything.

Sincerely Yours,
Robert Cattryysse.

P.S. Since the February 1986 article "Triumph and Tragedy" (which took 2½ days to complete — Sat., Feb. 1 to Mon., Feb. 3 — and was printed a few days later) I've written many other articles:

What Went Wrong? - March 1986 AstroChat
A Grim Discovery - April 1986
New Shots of a Disaster - May 1986
The Halley Flotilla - July-August 1986
An Ambitious Future - October. This article was about the report from the National Commission on Space released May 22, 1986 on what to do in the next 50 years in space.

12-page report on the "Report of the Presidential Commission on the Space Shuttle Challenger Accident." This was apart from the October 1986 AstroChat.

Space Shuttle to Fly Again in February, 1988 And Our Sun The Fickle, Middle-aged Star Earth Depends On Part I: The Birth of a Star - November 1986 AstroChat.

The later articles I plan to send to you later.

I was wondering if anybody at Concord High would like to write one or more articles on the space program or anything to do with the space program. Anybody can write this, student, teacher or you (or a student who's written about the Shuttle or space program in the school newspaper) and I will be glad to have this printed in the newsletter of the Chatham-Kent Astronomy Club, AstroChat — Astronomy Chatham. If you have more than one article I can span these from month to month. I sure hope you could do this and I'll be glad to send a few copies of the newsletter to you Mr. Foley. Hope to hear from you soon.

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