

Jan 29/86

To whom it may concern,

This letter is for the family and relatives of Christa McAuliffe, her friends, the students of Concord High School and indirectly to the families, relatives and friends of: Francis Scobee, Michael Smith, Judith Aresnik, Ronald McNair, Ellison S. Onizuka & Gregory B. Jarvis.

It was with shock that my family and I witnessed the terrible shuttle tragedy. There was an air of disbelief in our household. We hoped that somehow, some way by some miracle perhaps, that Christa and the six other astronauts would come out of it unscathed. In spite of insurmountable odds we kept hoping — until NASA's press conference confirmed our, and that of the world's, worst fears. Their deaths, and the agony of their families, relatives, friends & your nation moved me to write you.

It has been said that ^{this} is a tragedy of national proportions. True. But it is more than that. Millions of people in Canada and around the world saw the disaster. No one, with any sense of rationality, could not have been more shocked nor saddened by it. You've heard world leaders express condolences of their nations. Don't regard these messages as clichés. They're true. It is just that not everyone writes letters of this sort. Besides, it is difficult to put some emotions into words — I'm having trouble myself.

It's obvious that we didn't know Christa McAuliffe, but from her interviews she sounded like someone who was bubbling with life. If ever there was a legacy, it would be her vibrant personality and her will to strive

for the utmost in life. I'm sure that she would want to be remembered that way.

Death is a brutal fact of life. The tragedy of this, is many younger children will have lost some of their innocence because of what they saw. Time does ease the pain - not completely - but it does ease it. We wouldn't be human if this sort of pain was erased completely. I can only hope that the trauma of the accident will be eased as well.

I don't write empty words. We know what your pain is like for we too lost a family member five years ago.

One final note: What really broke our hearts was when Christa's daughter said that she didn't want her mother to go. That statement has brought on emotions that we can't even begin to describe.

You could say that this letter represents the feelings of millions of people around the world.

I was just shown a card with this quote. You may find it appropriate:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference."

Our hearts go out to all of you.

Bob, Anna, Renato & Sean Hinkle
Victoria, B.C., Canada