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For Immediate Release

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Local Hero Steven L. Smith to Receive Legacy for Children Award from Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose

Smith in top ten American and World lists of spacewalk time

San Jose, CA – April 25, 2018 – Steve Smith defines persistence. And that's an understatement. A medical issue landed Smith a rejection from the Air Force Academy and four rejections from [NASA](#) but that didn't deter him from achieving his lifelong goal of becoming an astronaut. [Smith](#) was selected into the highly competitive NASA program in 1992 and into the history books on the all-time American and World spacewalk duration lists. [Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose](#) will honor Steve Smith with the Legacy for Children Award 2018 at the annual fundraising gala on May 18, at 6 p.m., at the McEnery Convention Center in San Jose.

"People say Silicon Valley embraces failure, but I think what we do is respect and reward resilience - the ability to bounce back, adapt, and innovate," said Marilee Jennings, executive director of Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. "Steve's dogged persistence and remarkable courage and leadership skills make him an outstanding role model for inspiring today's children to pursue their dreams and to never give up."

As a veteran of four space flights covering 16 million miles and seven spacewalks totaling 49 hours and 25 minutes, Smith's extraordinary experiences of viewing Earth from outer space inspired him to hope that Earth will one day be a place tolerant of all peoples, religions, and cultures.

"The wonderful thing about Steve is that his legacy is far beyond his astronaut experience," said Jennings. "He's simply an incredible human being that is guided by a set of profound values and principles."

"I'm deeply honored to be recognized for my work in helping young people pursue their dreams with confidence, strength and tenacity," said Steve Smith. "Space travel changed my life in so many magical ways. I'm humbled that Children's Discovery Museum, an organization that sets youngsters up for success with what I call 'the explorer's mindset' – creative thinking, resilience, and persistence - is recognizing me."

Smith was born in Phoenix and went to school in San Jose where at age six he drew himself next to a spaceship. He earned two engineering degrees and an MBA from Stanford University while becoming a two-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Champion in water polo and leading the 1980 team as captain.

After Stanford, Smith worked at IBM while pursuing his dream of space travel. After three rejections from NASA, he moved to Houston to be a NASA engineer and improve his chances of being accepted into the astronaut program. Another rejection came. Devastated, but undeterred, Smith worked with NASA doctors to waive the nagging medical regulation that had thwarted him for years.

At 33, he was in and at 35 he flew into space.

Smith is one of America's most experienced astronauts who now inspires audiences around the country as a motivational speaker.

[More Background on Steve Smith](#)

Smith was a mission specialist aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* in 1994 and performed three spacewalks as a member of the *Discovery* mission servicing the Hubble Space Telescope in 1997. He returned to the Hubble in 1999 and executed two spacewalks as the Payload Commander. Smith was the lead spacewalker in 2002, completing two of the flight's four spacewalks on the Space Shuttle *Atlantis* that worked on the International Space Station. He later served as the NASA International Space Station (ISS) Program Liaison to the European Space Agency until 2015 and then as the Associate Director for ISS, Science Directorate, at NASA Ames Research Center in Silicon Valley.

Smith was awarded two NASA Distinguished Service Medals (the highest award bestowed by NASA to a federal employee), a NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal, four NASA Space Flight Medals, two NASA Exceptional Service Medals, a Johns Hopkins University President's Medal, an American Astronautical Society (AAS) Flight Achievement Award, an IBM Outstanding Technical Achievement Award, and an IBM Outstanding Community Service Award. He's a seven-time high school and collegiate All-American in swimming and water polo and a two-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Champion in water polo and was captain of the 1980 NCAA Championship team. He is a board director with Blue Sky Network, The Lindbergh Foundation, The Center for the Advancement of Science In Space (CASIS) and is a former board member of Special Olympics Texas and The Cousteau Society.

[Legacy for Children Award](#)

Each year the [Legacy for Children Award](#) honors an individual who has made a tremendous difference in the lives of children. Past recipients include Sonia Manzano, Ruby Bridges, Steve Wozniak, Kristi Yamaguchi, Mister Fred Rogers, Dr. Sally Ride, and Ronnie Lott. The event supports the museum in its mission to provide hands-on educational exhibits, in-depth programming, and cultural events designed to give our community's children the tools that will help them grow into the talented, creative, and diverse workforce of tomorrow. [The Museums for All](#) program supported by Legacy for Children sponsorships ensures that all families can visit the Museum regardless of ability to pay. Last year's 17th annual event raised \$1.4 million.

[About Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose](#)

With over 150 interactive exhibits and programs, **Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose** is one of the largest museums of its kind in the nation. Since opening its doors in 1990, the museum has welcomed over 8.6 million visitors and has offered new exhibits each year that respond to children's diverse educational needs. The striking 52,000 square foot purple building was designed by Mexico City-based architect Ricardo Legorreta and is a beacon of discovery. Encompassing the broad themes of community, connections and creativity, hands-on exhibits invite self-directed, open-ended explorations. For more information about the Museum, visit www.cdm.org.