



**MEDIA RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Perseverance and Passion:  
Astronaut Inspires Future Generation in Rumson**

Students in the Rumson School District had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity on Friday, October 18th, when they were visited by renowned astronaut, scientist, professional speaker, educator, and author, Dr. Don Thomas. Dr. Thomas, a NASA Mission Specialist, shared his inspiring journey and captivated the young minds with tales of perseverance and exploration.

Dr. Thomas recounted how his fascination with space began at the young age of six. Watching the early astronauts like Alan Shepard, John Glenn, and Neil Armstrong launch into the cosmos ignited a lifelong dream of becoming an astronaut himself. Despite facing numerous setbacks, including two unsuccessful applications to NASA, Dr. Thomas's determination prevailed. He was finally selected as a Mission Specialist in NASA's 13th group of astronauts in 1990.

During his visit, Dr. Thomas shared his experiences from his 44 days in space to orbiting the Earth nearly 700 times. He provided breathtaking images of our planet from the unique perspective of space, offering students a glimpse into the vastness and beauty of the universe. Dr. Thomas also discussed the challenges and rewards of life in space, including the importance of teamwork, adapting to a microgravity environment, and maintaining a lifestyle far different than back on Earth.

The Rumson School District is grateful to Dr. Don Thomas for his inspiring visit and for sharing his knowledge and passion with the next generation of scientists, engineers, and explorers. The District also extends its thanks to the Rumson Borough for their assistance in coordinating this incredible opportunity.

