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Georgia Southern to host Col. Frederick Gregory as 2017 Fries Distinguished Lectureship Series speaker

SEPTEMBER 20, 2017

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Georgia Southern University will host Col. Frederick "Fred" Gregory, the first African American man to direct a space mission, as the 2017 Normal Fries Distinguished Lectureship Series speaker at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 5, at the Nessmith-Lane Conference Center Assembly Hall, 847 Plant Drive.

His presentation, titled, "An Astronaut's View of Choices, Influences, Contributions and Other Stuff Later Discovered," will discuss his stellar career and the concept of choices in life. The lecture is free and open to the public.

"Looking down from space at our beautiful home...Earth...one wonders what choices had been offered and taken, what goals were considered, evaluated and selected, what influences shaped your path, and what molded the character that you had become," said Gregory. "My life offers many choices. Each choice taken, or not taken, has a profound affect on where you are right now.

After graduating from the United States Air Force Academy in 1964, Gregory entered pilot training and attended undergraduate helicopter training at Stead Air Force Base in Nevada. He then served as a helicopter rescue pilot, a combat rescue pilot in Vietnam, a missile support helicopter pilot and a

fixed-wing pilot. He later attended the United States Naval Test Pilot School and served as an operational test pilot. In 1974 he was detailed to the NASA Langley Research Center where he served as a research test pilot for several years.

Gregory was selected as an astronaut in 1978 and served several rotations in space through the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. His first assignment was as pilot of the space shuttle *Challenger* followed soon after by the *Discovery*. He has logged more than 6,976 hours flying time in more than 50 types of aircraft — including 550 combat missions in Vietnam.

Gregory serves on the Board of Directors for the Young Astronaut Council, the Challenge Center for Space Science Education and the Virginia Air and Space Center-Hampton Roads History Center.

Among his many honors, Gregory holds the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the National Intelligence Medal of Achievement, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, 16 Air Medals and the NASA Distinguished Service Medal.

The annual Norman Fries Distinguished Lectureship series began in 2001. It is funded by an endowment in honor of the late Norman Fries, the founder of Claxton Poultry. In his more than 50 years of business, Fries built the company from a one-man operation into one of the largest poultry production plants in the United States. Past Fries lecturers include David Oreck of Oreck Vacuums, South African apartheid author and lecturer Mark Mathabane, NASA director James W. "Jim" Kennedy, author and historian Gordon S. Wood, Nobel prize-winner Dr. William D. Phillips, best-selling author Susan Orlean, concussion expert Dr. Russell Gore, and, most recently, award-winning ethologist and biologist Frans de Waal, Ph.D.

Georgia Southern University, a public Carnegie Doctoral/Research University founded in 1906, offers 118 degree programs serving 20,673 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. Georgia Southern is recognized for its student-centered and hands-on approach to education. Visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu.

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