

US space shuttle to honor Giffords with flyover (Update)

September 20 2012, by Ramit Plushnick-masti



In this image provided by NASA the Space Shuttle Endeavour is ferried by NASA's Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (SCA) over the Kennedy Space Center in the early morning hours of Sept. 19, 2012 as it departs for California. Endeavour and the Shuttle Carrier Aircraft are in Houston after leaving Kennedy Space Center Wednesday. The ferry flight continues at dawn Thursday, heading to NASA Dryden, then on to Los Angeles Friday. This is the last flight for a space shuttle. (AP Photo/Robert Markowitz, NASA)

(AP)—The space shuttle Endeavour will honor former Congresswoman

Gabrielle Giffords with a flyover of her Arizona hometown on its way to the California museum where it will be displayed, the U.S. space agency said Thursday.

The flyover was requested by Giffords' husband, retired astronaut Mark Kelly, who was the last person to command an Endeavor mission, said NASA spokeswoman Lisa Malone.

Giffords resigned from Congress earlier this year to focus on her recovery from a gunman's attack last year in which six people were killed.

The flyover gives NASA the chance to recognize Giffords' legacy as a longtime advocate and champion of U.S. spaceflight, Malone said.

The shuttle left Houston on Thursday morning, bolted to the top of a regular jet. This is the last such flight of a space shuttle as the U.S. ends the shuttle program in favor of other space exploration efforts.

Endeavour was scheduled to land Friday in Los Angeles, where next month it will be transported very slowly down city streets to the California Science Center, where it will be on display.

Engineers have been busy planning the safest route for the shuttle's careful transport through Los Angeles so its sensitive outer covering won't be damaged.

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