

The John Glenn Top Gun Academy Aerospace Honor Society of Stewart Middle School held its prestigious Induction Ceremony on Friday, November 14, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the St. Pete History Museum. This inspiring event celebrated the achievements of outstanding students and honored long-time supporters of aerospace education.

Special guest Astronaut Nicole Stott headlined the ceremony as she shared captivating stories and videos from her missions in outer space. Her message encouraged these students to reach for the stars—both literally and figuratively—as they pursue excellence in academics, leadership, and innovation.

The ceremony also featured a unique historical presentation by an interpretive actor, who portrayed Tony Jannus, the pioneering aviator whose legacy continues to influence aerospace exploration today. Tony Jannus was the pilot of the *Benoist* flying boat, which conducted the first commercial flight on January 4, 1914. Tony Jannus flew from St. Petersburg to Tampa with one paying passenger. On that flight, Passengers flew aboard the *Benoist*, and a second plane flown by Tony's brother, from January through March of 1914. The *Benoist* is hanging from the ceiling of the exhibit hall where the induction took place. He told of his "history" of his flying endeavors.

Blue Origin, a leader in spaceflight innovation, which a mission to build "a road to space for the benefit of Earth." An engineer from Blue Origin presented an exciting update of their work, including the development of the new John Glenn rocket, a tribute to the legendary astronaut and senator, which had just flown its second flight the day prior.

Nicole Stott then award pendants to all the Stewart students who had been selected to enter the John Glenn Top Gun Academy. In a special moment of recognition, Nicole Stott inducted three distinguished adult honorees into the Aerospace Honor Society. That included Bill Yucuis from the Waterman-Twining AFA Chapter and two representatives from the Women in Defense organization. Both organizations have been staunch supports of Stewart middle School for many years.