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U.S. Astronaut Charles Conrad Dies

From: **Steven L. Wilson Sr** <Ndunlks@aol.com>
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U.S. Astronaut Charles Conrad Dies

.c The Associated Press

OJAI, Calif. (AP) - Charles P. 'Pete' Conrad Jr., an American astronaut who was the third man to walk on the moon, died Thursday after a motorcycle accident near Ojai. He was 69.

Conrad was riding his motorcycle with friends when he crashed on a turn, Ventura County Deputy Coroner James Baroni said. Conrad, who lived in Huntington Beach near Los Angeles, died later at an Ojai hospital.

As commander of the Apollo 12 mission in 1969, Conrad earned the distinction of being the third man to walk on the moon. Along with astronaut Alan Bean, Conrad spent seven hours and 45 minutes on the lunar surface.

NASA selected Conrad, an aeronautical engineer, as an astronaut in 1962. He was the pilot of the Gemini 5 mission in 1965, which set an endurance record in orbiting the earth. A year later, Conrad commanded Gemini 11, which docked with another craft and featured space walks by another pilot.

Conrad, who was an aviator in the U.S. Navy after graduating from Princeton University, also flew in the first manned Skylab mission, in 1973. During this mission, he established a personal endurance record for time in space, with 1,179 hours and 38 minutes.

In an interview with The Associated Press over Memorial Day weekend at Kennedy Space Center, Conrad said he was looking forward to the day he turned 77.

"I fully expect that NASA will send me back to the moon as they treated Sen. (John) Glenn, and if they don't do otherwise, why, then I'll have to do it myself", he declared.

After retiring from NASA and the Navy, he worked as chief operating officer of American Television and Communications Corp. in Denver and later for McDonnell Douglas Corporation, the aviation manufacturer.

In 1995, he formed his own company called Universal Space Lines and several sister companies with the goal of commercializing space.

"He was going back to space as an entrepreneur, trying to create ways for rockets to launch inexpensively and manage satellites", said his widow, Nancy Conrad.

Conrad is survived by his wife, four sons and seven

grandchildren. A son preceded him in death.

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