

JFK and Elvis Visit Historic Mission Operations Control Center

A remarkable event occurred recently. In conjunction with the 40th Anniversary lunar landing July festivities, both JFK and Elvis Presley appeared in historic recreated glory for the Texas High School Aerospace Scholars. JFK's mimic, Jerry Woodfill, gave the President's September 12th, 1962, Rice Stadium Moon Race speech to the nearly 50 students attending the week's workshop. Jerry was present as a Rice student that day nearly a half century ago. It was Kennedy's message which led to Woodfill's continuing 44 year career at the Johnson Space Center.



JFK's Rice Stadium Recreation in Astro-Elvis Attire

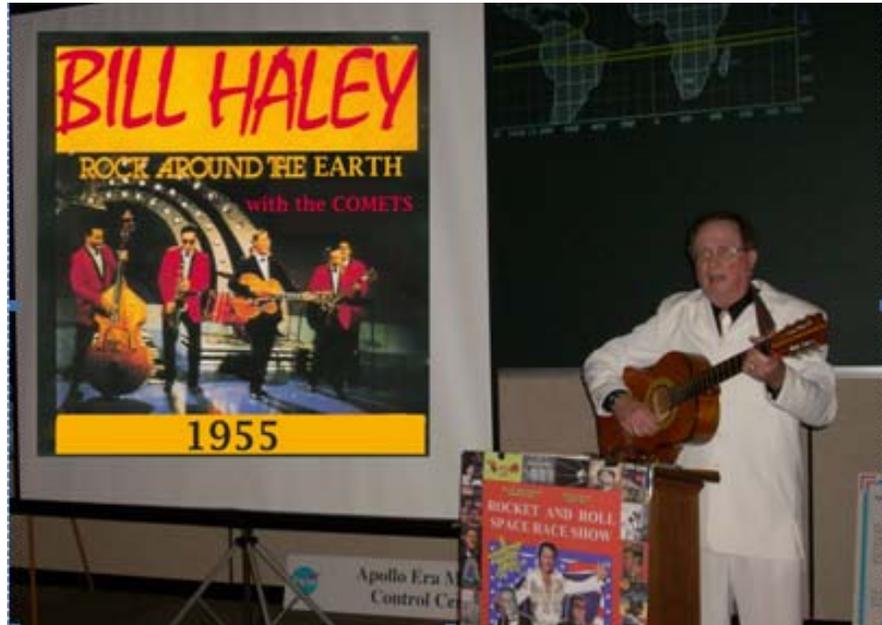
Employing a pseudo Presidential Seal of a "Resident of the United States of America" along with a poster replica of the original Rice podium now at Space Center Houston, the dramatic recreation captured the passion JFK exhibited that day long ago. Unfortunately, JFK wore Elvis's white suit employed for Woodfill's "Rocket and Roll Space Race Show" presented moments before to the high school aerospace scholars.

Astro-Elvis along with *Roy Orbison* belted out space race parody versions of the greatest hits of the fifties and sixties such as "Ain't Nothin' But a Muttnik", "Don't be the Lonely", and Woodfill's adaptation of Johnny Cash's "I Fell into a Flaming Ring of Fire" commemorating the difficulties of the early days of American rocketry.

Both the space race and Rock 'n Roll launched simultaneously in the mid 1950s. Indeed, even that first famous group of "rockers" had an astronomical name, Bill Haley and the Comets. Appropriately, Woodfill's introductory song was "Rock Around the Earth" commemorating the 1955 hit "Rock Around the Clock." Nevertheless besides the songs, the program

dealt with space history leading up to that momentous day, July 20th, 1969 when America won the space race.

As Astro-Elvis departed, a voice was heard saying, “Elvis has left the MOCR!”



Astro_Elvis Performing “Rock Around the Earth”



Astro_Elvis Singing “Ain’t Nothin’ But a Muttnik”



Don't Be the Lonely by Roy Orbison



Astro_Elvis Pictured with High School Aerospace Scholars after Show