



**Press Release 23-06**

**October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

## **IAA Attributes the Von Karman Award for 2023 to**

### **Dr. Chiaki Mukai**

The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) has attributed the Theodore von Karman Award for 2023 to Dr. Chiaki Mukai, in recognition of a lifetime of service in advancing the Space activities of Japan and humankind as the first Asian female astronaut whose important research in the environment of Space led to advances in science, technology and medicine in low-Earth orbit that have expanded the exploration of Space. Dr. Mukai continues to inspire new generations of women and men globally to pursue educational opportunities to find a better way of life for themselves and their communities. Her dedicated efforts through the United Nations have significantly advanced Space exploration and the peaceful uses of Outer Space for the betterment of all humanity. She was selected as an astronaut in 1985, and in 1994 became the first Asian astronaut to board the Space Shuttle Columbia. While onboard, she carried out experiments related to the life sciences and space medicine. She flew on the Space Shuttle Columbia as a Payload Specialist for the International Microgravity Laboratory (IML-2) mission STS-65. She conducted 82 life science (human physiology, space biology, radiation biology and bioprocess) and microgravity science (material and fluid science, research on microgravity environment and countermeasures) experiments. She flew on the STS-95 mission as a Payload Specialist along with US Senator John Glenn, the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth. She has worked as a research instructor in the Department of Surgery, Baylor College of Houston, as well as serving as a visiting professor of the Department of Surgery, Keio University school of Medicine. She joined NASA's John Glenn and others on an experimental mission as a Payload Specialist. She has worked as a visiting professor at the International Space University (ISU), with the goal of contributing to research into space medicine and health management on the International Space Station (ISS) for ISU Master Program students. She is currently Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of JAXA and Vice President of the Tokyo University of Science.