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**ALUMNI FROM THE PAST 50 YEARS WILL HELP CELEBRATE
SUFFOLK COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S
50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMENCEMENT AND 100,000TH GRADUATE**

Keynote Speaker is Retired NASA Astronaut and SCCC Alumnus, Commander Robert L. Gibson

Selden, NY –Suffolk County Community College will bring together alumni representatives of each graduating class from the past 50 years as part of the ceremony commemorating the College's 50th Anniversary at this year's commencement. The ceremony will be held on Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m. in the Field House of the Health, Sports and Education Center on the Michael J. Grant Campus in Brentwood. This year, the College's graduating class numbers 3,200 and the College will celebrate 100,000 graduates during its history.

The keynote speaker will be retired NASA Astronaut and SCCC Alumnus (Class of 1966), Commander Robert "Hoot" Gibson. After graduating from Suffolk, Commander Gibson went on to earn a degree in Aeronautical Engineering from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. He entered the United States Navy and flew combat missions in Southeast Asia from 1972 to 1975, making more than 300 carrier landings aboard the Aircraft Carriers USS *Coral Sea* and the USS *Enterprise*. After attending the Navy Fighter Weapons School, "Topgun", he graduated first in his class at the U. S. Navy Test Pilot School and served as a Flight Test Pilot, prior to being selected as an Astronaut in 1978 in the first Space Shuttle Astronaut selection.

In 18 years as an Astronaut, he flew five space missions, four of them as the Mission Commander, aboard the Space Shuttles "*Challenger*", *Columbia*", "*Atlantis*" and "*Endeavour*", and accumulated over 36 days in space. His final space flight was the first mission to rendezvous and dock with the Russian Space Station "*Mir*" in 1995. After leaving NASA and retiring from the U. S. Navy in 1996, Captain Gibson flew for 10 years as an airline pilot with Southwest Airlines. In a flying career covering over 45 years, he has accumulated more than 13,000 hours of flight time in more than 100 types of military and civilian aircraft. In 2003, he was inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame. Commander Gibson attributes his professional success to the fact that his academic career began at Suffolk County Community College.

Dr. Shaun L. McKay, Suffolk County Community College's President, will preside over Sunday's ceremony. "It is a great honor to welcome a representative from each of the College's graduating classes. We are proud of our rich history and the success of our graduates since our founding in 1959. We are especially pleased that Commander Gibson was able to participate as

our keynote speaker. His career as a NASA astronaut will be an inspiration to graduates seeking ways to build their own successful careers following their start at Suffolk,” Dr. McKay stated.



Photo Caption: Retired NASA Astronaut, Commander Robert L. Gibson (SCCC alumnus-Class of 1966), will be Suffolk County Community College’s 2010 commencement speaker.

About Suffolk County Community College

Suffolk County Community College (SCCC) is the largest community college in the State University of New York (SUNY) system, enrolling more than 23,000 students at its three campuses in Selden, Brentwood and Riverhead. SCCC offers the Associate in Arts (A.A.), Associate in Science (A.S.), and Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree, as well as a variety of certificate programs. Offering the lowest college tuition on Long Island, a highly respected Honors program, extensive extracurricular activities, championship athletic teams, and numerous unified transfer programs, SCCC is a first-choice college for Long Island students. Visit us online at sunysuffolk.edu.

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