



Dr. Charles Simonyi

2024 Pathfinder Award Recipient in The Education Category

The Museum of Flight's Annual Pathfinder Awards honor individuals with ties to the Pacific Northwest who have made significant contributions to the development of the aerospace industry. Pathfinder Award recipients are selected by The Museum of Flight, the Pacific Northwest Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and representatives of other aviation and aerospace organizations and companies throughout the Northwest.



Born in Budapest, Charles Simonyi has contributed to a range of acclaimed scientific and technological advancements that have benefited the world. Pursuing his passion for space exploration, Simonyi participated in two missions to the International Space Station (ISS): the Soyuz TMA-10 mission in 2007 and

the Soyuz TMA-14 mission in 2009, becoming the fifth space tourist and the first-ever tourist to fly twice. Prior to his flights, Dr. Simonyi underwent months of preparation, including gaining zero-gravity experience aboard an airplane and survival training.

The Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, established in 2003, has made a significant difference in the Seattle region and around the world by providing grants to outstanding organizations in the arts, sciences and education, including the Institute for Advanced Study, University of Oxford for a Chair for the Public Understanding of Science, the Seattle Symphony, the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope, Raisbeck Aviation High School, and of course,

The Museum of Flight.

At the Museum, his support was instrumental in creating the state-of-the-art Charles Simonyi Space Gallery, which bears his name in recognition of his commitment to aerospace education and enthusiasm for inspiring the next generation of space explorers. Fittingly, one of the artifacts displayed there is the Soyuz TMA-14 capsule that carried him from the ISS in 2009.

Dr. Simonyi's personal goals for his two missions were to advance civilian space flight and assist in research. But his most significant and long-lasting contribution was to educate all learners in the disciplines of science, art and space in the Pacific Northwest and throughout the world.