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AIAA MOURNS PASSING OF ARTHUR R. KANTROWITZ

AIAA Honorary Fellow Developed Ablative Nose Cone, High-Powered Lasers

December 12, 2008 – Reston, Va. – The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) mourns the passing of AIAA Honorary Fellow Arthur R. Kantrowitz. He died on November 29 at the age of 95, in New York City.

Dr. Kantrowitz was one of the earliest technological innovators of the Space Age, having developed the ablative rocket nose cone in the 1950s. Covering the nose cone with material that could safely burn away made it possible for ballistic missiles to survive reentry into the earth's atmosphere at speeds over 18,000 miles per hour, which subject the cone to extremely high temperatures. A nose cone launched in April of 1958 on a Thor-Able rocket is now part of the Smithsonian Institution's space technology materials collection.

Dr. Kantrowitz is also considered the "father" of laser propulsion, having developed high-powered lasers that he suggested could be used to propel spacecraft into orbit. He also helped develop the the intra-aorta heart-assist balloon pump, which has been used successfully in millions of patients.

Dr. Kantrowitz established and directed the Avco Everett Research Laboratory in Massachusetts, taught at Cornell and Dartmouth, and during the Ford administration served as a member of the Advisory Group on Anticipated Advances in Science in Technology.

AIAA honored Dr. Kantrowitz in 1998 by making him an Honorary Fellow, in recognition of his outstanding technical and scientific contributions over the course of his long and productive career.

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