



*A Step Into The Universe*

For Immediate Release

Contact: Susan Schonfeld, 845-721-9456

### **WORLD RENOWNED POET'S VERSES TO FLY TO THE MOON IN 2011**

July 21, 2009 (Houston, TX) -- As part of the 40th anniversary of the historic *Apollo 11* moon landing, Celestis, Inc.([www.celestis.com](http://www.celestis.com)), the pioneer and global leader in Memorial Spaceflight, announced today that it will launch verses of Miguel Hernández' poem "Perito en Lunas" ("Expert in Moon Matters") to the Moon. Launch is projected to occur as early as 2011. The inclusion of the poem on Celestis' next lunar mission has been arranged at the request of the Fundación Cultural Miguel Hernández (the Miguel Hernández Cultural Foundation) in Orihuela, Spain.

The flight of Hernández' works to the Moon will fulfill Hernández' "Expert in Moon Matters" literary epithet. Celestis decided to include Hernández' works in honor of the 100 year anniversary of the world renowned poet's birth, which will be celebrated October 30, 2010. Hernández was a leading 20th century Spanish poet and playwright. "Perito en Lunas" was marked by his creative use of metaphors, and is one of his most famous works.

During the Spanish Civil War Hernández campaigned in favor of the Republic, writing poetry and addressing the troops deployed to the front. Hernández was arrested multiple times after the war for his anti-fascist sympathies, and was eventually sentenced to death. His death sentence, however, was commuted for a prison term of 30 years, leading him to live in multiple jails under extraordinarily harsh conditions until eventually succumbing to tuberculosis in 1942.

While in jail, Hernández produced an extraordinary amount of poetry, much of it in the form of simple songs, which he collected in his papers and sent to his wife and others. These poems are now known as his "Cancionero y romancero de ausencias" ("Songs and Ballads of Absences"). In these works, Hernández writes not only of the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War and his own incarceration, but also of the death of an infant son and the struggle of his wife and another son to survive in poverty. The intensity and simplicity of the poems, combined with his extraordinary situation, give them remarkable power.

"We are pleased to include Miguel Hernández on our next Luna Service mission," notes Celestis Founder and President Charles M. Chafer. "These Luna Service missions extend our leadership in the commercial space industry, enable further space exploration for generations to come, and – most importantly – serve our global community of families and loved ones wishing to honor the life of a special person. Our clients find that our various memorial spaceflights offer a very touching tribute to a loved one."

In 1998, Celestis, at the request of NASA, provided a Luna Flight Capsule to the family and friends of the late legendary astronomer and planetary geologist Dr. Eugene Shoemaker. The Celestis Flight Capsule, containing a symbolic portion of Dr. Shoemaker's cremated remains, was attached to NASA's *Lunar Prospector* spacecraft and launched on a one year mission orbiting the Moon. On July 31, 1999, at the

completion of the *Lunar Prospector*'s mission, the spacecraft was intentionally impacted into the Moon's south pole, making Dr. Shoemaker the first human inhabitant to be laid to rest on another celestial body. NASA called this memorial "a special honor for a special human being."

Through its Luna Service, Celestis makes this special honor available to all who share the vision of extending humanity's reach to the stars.

Celestis has chosen three companies to provide transportation to the Moon: Odyssey Moon Limited ([www.OdysseyMoon.com](http://www.OdysseyMoon.com)), Astrobotic Technology, Inc. ([www.AstroboticTechnology.com](http://www.AstroboticTechnology.com)), and Next Giant Leap ([www.NextGiantLeap.com](http://www.NextGiantLeap.com)). Each company has announced plans to conduct privately funded lunar missions.

The Celestis Luna Flight Capsules containing the cremated remains will be integrated onto the lunar landers in a manner that will actually enhance the prospects for mission success – providing balance and counterweight to stabilize the spacecraft. Once on the lunar surface the capsules will remain within the spacecraft, creating a permanent memorial to those on board. Note that the cremated remains will not be scattered on the moon: Celestis memorial spaceflights are environmentally benign and are conducted in accordance with international treaties.

Celestis, Inc. opened the space frontier to post cremation memorials in 1997 with the *Founders Flight*, sending 24 flight capsules into Earth orbit aboard a Pegasus rocket. Celestis has conducted eight memorial spaceflights serving people from 14 nations, including *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry, Mercury astronaut Gordon Cooper, beloved *Star Trek* actor James Doohan ("Scotty"), and men and women from all walks of life.

###