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The country is mourning the loss Neil Armstrong, the man who's first steps on moon changed history. The former astronaut passed away Saturday at the age of 82.

On July 20, 1969, the world watched Armstrong's moment on the moon and listened to those famous words: "That's one small step for man... one giant leap for mankind."

"I know I am joined by millions of others in mourning Neil's passing – a true American hero and the best pilot I ever knew," Eugene "Buzz" Aldrin, Armstrong's crewmate on the mission, said on Twitter.

"As young girl watching Neil Armstrong step on the moon, the stars came a little bit closer & my world & expectations quite a bit larger," Mae Jemison, the first African-American female astronaut, tweeted.

"He took something that 20 years earlier was pure fantasy and turned it into reality. And if we could do that for space, we could do it for anything," Howard McCurdy, a professor of space and public policy at American University, said.

Despite Armstrong's great accomplishment, he never wanted to be in the spotlight. After returning from the moon he moved back to a small town in Ohio, taught college, and raised a family.

Armstrong rarely spoke to the media, but in one of his last interviews, he said his greatest disappointment is that he never once had a dream about his walk on the moon.

Aldrin, an elder in his Presbyterian church at the time, had planned a special commemoration for the 1969 moon landing.

According to author Eric Metaxas, Aldrin carried a communion wafer and a small vial of communion wine that had been blessed by his pastor.

After the lunar module touched down, Aldrin asked everyone to take a moment to give thanks in their own way. He then read scripture and took communion on the moon.

"I am the vine, you are the branches," Aldrin read from John 15:5. "Whoever abides in me will bring forth much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing."

Aldrin wanted the event to be broadcast back to earth. But NASA decided against it since the agency was embroiled with a lawsuit with atheist Madelyn Murry O'Hair.

The suit was over the reading from the book of Genesis when Apollo 8 circled the moon in December of '68.

Americans never knew about the Aldrin's communion ceremony on the moon until years later.

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PS. Madelyn Murry O'Hair's son William J Murray publicly apologised to America and God for his part in building "the personal empire" of his mother.

"Looking back on the 33 years of my life I wasted without faith and without God I pray that I may be able to correct just some of the wrong I have created", said William J. Murray of Houston in a letter to the editor of the the Austin American- Statesman.

Murray who has apparently converted to Christianity since his split with his mother several years ago, was the plaintiff in a suit filed in Massachusetts that resulted in compulsory prayers being banned from public schools.

"I would like to apologise to the people of Austin for the part I played in the building of the personal empire of Madalyn O'Hair. My efforts to that end were an affront to the people of Austin, the people of the nation and to God", Murray's letter said.

"My crime was two-fold in that I was aware of the wrong of my actions at the time and continued them for the purpose of financial profit. I was continuing to practice the hateful and anti-moral way of life I had learned from birth in an atheist home".

"I loathe the idea that I lowered myself to editing her anti-God magazine", he said.

"Looking back on the 33 years of life I wasted without faith and without God I pray that I may be able to correct just some of the wrong I have created. The part I played as a teenager in removing prayer from public schools was criminal. I removed from our future generations that short time each day which should rightly be reserved for God. In as much as the suit to destroy the traditions of prayer in school was brought in my name, I feel gravely responsible for the resulting destruction of the moral fibre of our youth that it has caused".

From Dallas Times Herald, May 10, 1980.

More Links: "My life Without God" <http://www.wjmurray.com/>