

Stuart students get lunar lesson from 6th moonwalker

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STUART — The sixth astronaut to walk on the moon came to J.D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology to speak of his journey into space on a 363-foot rocket.

“We live in a universe that is integrated,” said Edgar Mitchell, speaking of a sensation that came to him as he returned to Earth from the moon. “It is all one.” The 79-year-old, a member of the 1971 Apollo 14 mission and southern Palm

Beach County resident, visited Martin County schools Tuesday.

Besides speaking to second- through fifth-graders at JD Parker, he visited Stuart Middle School and Indian River State College.

Mitchell’s fascination with space began early, he said.

As a child, he was interested in the fictional Buck Rogers, a character who embarked on adventures in space. He flew planes in the U.S. Navy, and in 1957 learned of the launch of the Soviet Satellite Sputnik.

“I knew, as many of us knew, that I wanted to go into space at that point,” he told the hundreds of J.D. Parker students.

In 1971, Mitchell and two crew members embarked on NASA’s third moon-landing from Cape Canaveral, the former astronaut said, eliciting “oohs” and “aaahs” from the students as he showed slides of the rocket blasting off.

He piloted the lunar module that landed in the moon’s Fra Mauro Highlands, he said, and gave the students a quick tour of the moon, explaining how it got its craters and giving the audience a view of the moon’s features as he spoke. He explained how he and fellow Astronaut Alan Shepard collected soil samples and other data from the lunar surface.

But it wasn’t all work, he said.

Shepard played golf on the moon, and he threw a javelin in what he described as the “first lunar Olympics.”

Mitchell said he wanted to teach students what space was like, especially since space travel has become more common.

“Space flight is routine,” he said. “It’s becoming a part of our cultural medium.”

Mitchell founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences in 1973, which studies consciousness and related subjects, such as intuition and belief.



GUY KITCHENS Correspondent

Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to walk on the moon, talks with elementary school students at JD Parker School of Math, Science, and Technology in Stuart on Tuesday. Mitchell went through a slide show with the students and showed some of the photos he took while on the moon. After the presentation, students participated in a question-and-answer session with the former astronaut and got his autograph.

