



Clayton Anderson  
 “Nebraska’s Astronaut”  
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Clayton Anderson spent five months in 2007 aboard the International Space Station. Anderson joined the Johnson Space Center in 1983. He was selected as an astronaut in 1996 and as a NASA mission specialist in 1998. He bravely performed three spacewalks. But he showed real courage when he faced his roasters as a Face on the Barroom Floor. Setting the stage for the lively evening were Pat and JT, morning show hosts for KQKQ-FM (98.5). The roasters included a U.S. senator and a college president. Here’s what they had to say:

Sen. Ben Nelson: *“I’ve gotten a bill introduced to give you frequent flyer miles for all of your space travel. That’s the good news. The bad news: You’ll just be like all the rest of us-- try and use those miles!”*

Allen Beermann, executive director, Nebraska Press Association: *“We all know that it took Clayton 15 tries to become an astronaut. Now we know why. In a school exam he was asked what happens to a boy during puberty. Clay’s answer: He says goodbye to his childhood and enters adultery.”*

Mary Fricke Bohn, his school friend from his hometown of Ashland: *“Clay started school two years ahead of me, but we graduated together!”*

Rod Bates, general manager of Nebraska Educational Television, presented a video of scenes from NET’s Anderson documentary that allegedly were left on the cutting-room floor. When Anderson took his first spacewalk, Bates said he expected to hear something memorable akin to Neil Armstrong’s “one small step for man . . . “ *But all Anderson could come up with was: “Things float up here, don’t they?”*”

The praise flowed freely to Anderson, too:

Nelson: *“I look at you as one of the treasures that Nebraska has reared.”*

Beermann: *“As an astronaut, you have some special g-forces: you’re good, generous, gracious, grateful, and you’ve taught us to be glad.”*

Phil Dudley, president, Hastings College (who narrated a humorous slide show of Anderson’s college days) said that Clayton Anderson joined Tom Osborne as best-known Hastings alum: *“Now it’s T.O. and C.A. Clayton, you’re a great asset to the college.”*

Anderson’s introduced his wife, Susan; son, Cole; and daughter, Sutton. And to the audience, he concluded: *“Please know that I love this state and I love her people. There is no place like Nebraska.”*