



NASA/MSFC Retirees Association

NASA/MSFC Retiree Association P. O. Box 4492, Huntsville, Alabama 35815

MAY 2021 ISSUE

QUARTERLY MRA LUNCHEON

TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 2021 THE LEDGES

Social & Registration: 11:00 – 12 noon – Lunch: 12 noon

Menu: Fresh Garden Salad, Grilled Chicken, Oven Roasted Potatoes, Fresh Green Beans, Dinner Rolls, Coffee & Tea Dessert: Lemon Ice Box Pie

\$20.00 per person

This will be a hybrid luncheon including “in person” and “Zoom (for those who are not vaccinated or do not feel comfortable in group meetings)”

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than noon on **Thursday, June 3, 2021** at benniejacks@att.net, or cell phone: 256.603.0894. A 72-hour cancellation notice is required by The Ledges. **If you are joining us by Zoom**, please provide Bennie with your current email and cell phone number. Samantha Hereford, a special friend to MRA, has been assisting us in Zoom meetings and will be sending you the Link to join us. Be sure that her email is accepted by you and that it doesn't go to Spam. Samantha Hereford email: samanthahereford@yahoo.com.



PROGRAM SPEAKER

TOPIC:

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN MRA AND USSRC

The Alabama Space Science Exhibit Commission announced the appointment of Dr. Kimberly Robinson as Executive Director and CEO of the U. S. Space & Rocket Center recently.

As a 31-year veteran of NASA, Dr. Robinson's background includes leadership, public engagement, engineering, education, flight crew training and hands-on experience shaping the nation's space program. Previous positions include serving as NASA's Utilization Manager for Advanced Exploration Systems, and previously the Payload Mission Manager for Artemis 1, the first integrated flight test of NASA's Orion spacecraft, the Space Launch Systems (SLS) rocket and the Exploration Ground Systems at KSC.

Before that, she served as the SLS Strategic Communications Manager, sharing the future of human space exploration with the public. She is the recipient of numerous NASA performance awards, including an Exceptional Achievement Medal and a Silver Snoopy. She completed her Ph.D and master's degrees in Engineering Management and Systems Engineering at UAH and her Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering from Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Robinson is married to Keith Robinson and has three sons. She is an avid community volunteer and serves as Vice President for A New Leash on Life, an animal rescue organization and has taught at Oakwood University and UAH.

President's Notes.....Rick Chappell

Best wishes to all of you as we experience the ending period for the pandemic which has certainly created a “new normal” for all of us. Zoom, Webex and Teams have jumped into the breach for many of our activities, making it possible to proceed with business, social and family activities. Thanks to America’s medical science and public health professionals who saved thousands of lives and created the vaccines that are bringing all of us protection from the virus.

The MRA Board has continued to meet quarterly by way of Zoom and Webex, keeping our programs operating. At our board meeting on May 12th, the board voted to proceed with our next scheduled MRA luncheon at the Ledges on June 8th in a hybrid approach that permits those who are vaccinated and feel safe to assemble in person and those who feel vulnerable to participate by Zoom. Our speaker will be Dr. Kimberly Robinson, recent NASA retiree after a 31- year career and new CEO of the U.S. Space & Rocket Center. MRA has been building a strong partnership with the USSRC that links us together in a variety of enhanced ways. This newsletter contains information regarding the June 8th meeting and how you can RSVP to Bennie Jacks.

Please join us on June 8th, stay safe and well, and think about and honor our colleagues who have left us during the pandemic.

Rick

Marshall Early Career Organization (MECO) Program

By Parker Counts

At the Marshall Retirees Association (MRA) board meeting Tuesday May 11, 2021, we discussed the importance of supporting the Marshall Early Career Organization (MECO) mentoring program. I have had several informal discussions with the MECO Council, and they look forward to having a chance to work with our retirees in a mentoring relationship. Our first approach is to utilize our database at www.marshallretirees.org to match young employees with retirees in the database. MRA has over 180 members and we should all add our work history to the database. With an expanded search capability focusing on specific skills, i.e., Materials, Propulsion, Science, Program Management, Avionics, Systems Engineering, Safety and Quality Assurance, etc. would allow the MECO employees a way to match their career objectives with mentors. While MRA will play a role, hopefully retirees outside of MRA will participate in the worthwhile program for young Marshall employees. We will continue to update you on the progress of this program and it getting up and running. If you wish to participate, contact Parker at: parker@countsconsultants.com.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Dues for 2021 were due beginning January 1, 2021. Dues are \$30 per year and may be paid by mailing a check, made to MSFC Retirees Association, to: MSFC Retirees Association, P. O. Box 4492, Huntsville, AL 35815, or by paying at the next Social. **Because we have not be able to meet in person since March of 2020, many did not have the opportunity to pay dues at the meetings. We will be meeting in person on June 8th, which will give members an opportunity to pay dues for 2021. If you do not plan to attend the June 8th meeting, please send in your payment at the address above. Your dues help support scholarships at Space Camp and UAH School of Engineering.**

Membership in the Association is open to former MSFC or other NASA Center employees. New retirees are automatically offered a free membership for the remainder of the year in which they retire. If retirement occurs after the first day of September, membership will be free for the remainder of the current year and for the entire upcoming year. Spouses of deceased MRA members may attain membership status with membership dues waived.

If your mailing address or e-mail address change, please remember to let Mary Spaulding know by e-mailing her at md_spaulding@comcast.net or calling 256-883-2228 so we can keep our records up to date.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS FOR 2021

Melvin L. Scruggs (1/3/21)

John O. Lassiter (1/8/21)

Dennon Clardy (1/11/21)

Rebecca B. Hopson (2/20/21)

Bruce K. Wallace (3/25/21)

Amy Epps (5/5/21)

Lou Ann Fikes (5/5/21)

MRA New Officers and Board Members

MRA is pleased to have Gray Settle as Treasurer. Gray has been heavily involved in MRA activities including the Memorial History Committee.

New Board Members and new to MRA include:

Mark King: He was Team Lead in the Information & Electronics Lab, Deputy Manager, Avionics Integration for Ares I Constellation Program, Spacecraft & Vehicle Systems Lab, and Opportunity Manager in Center Strategic Development, OSAC. He retired from MSFC in 2020.

Lybrease Woodard: Lybrease began her career as a coop student in the payload science crew training program. She served as Payloads Operation Director, as Deputy Director of the Mission Operations Laboratory and as Technical Assistant to the Director of the Engineering Directorate. She retired in May 2019.

Jim Turner: Jim began his career as a quality engineer in 1983. He served in Materials Laboratory, in the SSME Chief Engineer's Office, as Deputy Director of Vehicle Engineering Laboratory and Associate Director of Engineering. He retired in 2019.

Melissa McGrath: Melissa joined NASA in 2005, after 12 years at the Space Telescope Institute. In 2006, she served a one-year detail to NASA Headquarters as Deputy Director of Science Mission Directorate. She served as Marshall's Chief Scientist until she retired in 2015.

New Board Members who need NO introduction because of their long-standing membership in MRA and their many contributions to MRA programs and projects are: **Jack Stokes**, who worked day and night on the 50th Anniversary of the Lunar Landing and is now working on the Memorial. Jack started at MSFC in 1967 working crew systems on Skylab, then Neutral Buoyancy Tank Simulations and in 1984, crew interfaces on the Space Station Program. He retired in 2005. **Annette Tingle**, who has worked tirelessly on the Database Committee. Annette started at Marshall in 1963. She served as Chief, Technical Information & Services Branch, Management Operations Office. She also served as MSFC Technical Information Officer and MSFC Manager for Agency Scientific & Technical Information. Annette retired in 2004.

MRA extends its heartfelt thanks to outgoing board members, **John Thomas, Harvey Shelton, and Ken Fernandez**, who completed their terms and rotated off the Board in December 2020. Also, many thanks to **Linda Dinges** who served as Treasurer for many years managing our finances. We are grateful for their dedicated service to MRA.

Highlights of Continuing Progress on the Space Exploration Memorial (by Rick Chappell)

Despite the limitations in personal contact caused by the pandemic, MRA activities on the creation of the space exploration memorial have continued on several fronts: the online database of names and biographies, partnership interactions with the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, evolution of the phased memorial design, and fundraising from individuals and companies.

The online database lists the names of more than 21,000 present and former NASA/MSFC employees. The creation of this database was chaired by Sandra Turner and Gray Settle and other volunteers. We lost Sandra in February, and we are dedicating this unique historical database to her memory. Gray Settle, who has done all of the software work on the database, has agreed to become the Chair of the Memorial History Committee. Thanks to Sandra, Gray and the volunteers. **No other part of NASA has done this, and it is appropriate that Marshall and its retirees have been the first to create this incredible look at humankind's most significant exploration through this database.**

Now we need everyone to take a few minutes, go online to www.marshallretirees.org and add your biographical and career information and a picture for yourself or your family members if they have passed on. Also, please make a contribution to the Space Exploration Memorial in remembrance and honor of people whom you had the privilege of working with. To put this into perspective, suppose you were one of the 100 crewmembers of Columbus' first voyage. The only names we now remember from that voyage are Columbus, Ferdinand and Isabella. We do not know or remember the names of the crewmembers, many of whom were left to establish an outpost in Hispaniola because of the sinking of the Santa Maria on a reef during their visit. These people all died on Hispaniola, and we do not know their names. Now suppose you were one of the crewmembers and when you finally returned to Spain after an incredible journey, you were asked to give your name and experience to a person representing Spain so that you and your family could be remembered. But you did not do it, because you had other more important things to do. Now with America's and humankind's most incredibly journey of traveling and living in space, do you have time to add your story to the database? Is it important enough for you and the family who supported you to be acknowledged and remembered?

Highlights of Continuing Progress on the Space Exploration Memorial (Continued)

The MRA has had a positive and increasing partnership with the U.S. Space & Rocket Center (USSRC) regarding the creation of the memorial concept and the evolution of how it can be constructed and where it should be located. The donations that are made through the MRA website go to the 501c3, USSRC Education Foundation website and are held in a restricted fund for the Space Exploration Memorial. Our partnership with the USSRC has been important and mutually supported and will add to the bridge between our two organizations that began with our building the rockets and spacecraft that became the foundation of the USSRC and continued with the USSRC becoming the visitor center for MSFC and then with the docents program to which so many of you have contributed your time to make successful. MRA wants to expand this bridge in a way that more firmly and meaningfully connects the present and former employees and families to the place which displays the rockets and spacecraft that they have built and operated for America. The Space Exploration Memorial is one of the important elements of this bridge, tying the space explorers and their families to that place that shows their accomplishments—a place where their lives can be remembered and celebrated forever.

The memorial has been conceptually designed in phases so that it can be constructed as the funding is received. The initial phase has now been put in place, the online database which can be set up to be accessed by the public and by the space explorer's families at the USSRC. The location of the memorial and the initial kiosk are being discussed now. We have contracted with a very innovative company in Atlanta which is creating an animation of the memorial in the context of the USSRC campus, and MRA will use this animation to assist with public awareness and fundraising.

Because of the pandemic, fundraising has been affected, particularly with the companies because of the social distancing considerations. We are now entering a phase where these personal interactions can be more aggressively pursued. This has begun with discussions with one of the very large aerospace companies. Individual personal contributions have more than doubled since our last report and are at \$70,000 with the range of individual gifts from \$50 to \$25,000. Please consider making a donation to the memorial on the www.marshallretirees.org website when you add biographical information to the database.

Highlights of Continuing Progress on the Space Exploration Memorial (Continued)

Our own Wernher von Braun in a personal memo to President John F. Kennedy in 1961, listed the options that he foresaw for the US space program that could put us ahead of the Russians. The moon program was his recommendation and President Kennedy agreed, and we did it! That program created the incredible technology that has kept America in the leading role in space exploration from then to now. Let's not miss our opportunity to remember and honor all of our colleagues who have made space exploration and living in space possible, just as President Kennedy did not miss his opportunity to challenge America to the greatness that Marshall and its partnering companies have made possible. Please do your part to capture his historical achievement!

If you are not comfortable with making donations to the Space Exploration Memorial on line, you may send your check and a letter/note to the following address. The Foundation will notify the family of an honoree, if you provide that information. You will receive a letter of acknowledgement of your donation for tax purposes:

U. S. Space & Rocket Center Education Foundation
Attention: Brenda Carr, Executive Director
One Tranquility Base
Huntsville, AL 35805

If you have questions, call: 256.721.5425

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

UPCOMING MRA MEETINGS:

Tuesday, September 14, 2021 Luncheon – 11:00 a.m., The Ledges

Tuesday, December 14, 2021 Luncheon – 11:00 a.m., The Ledges



OBITUARIES

- Adams**, Robert (Bob), 86, of Huntsville, died May 12, 2021.
Agee, James Avery, 84, of Athens, died December 17, 2020.
Chou, Lynn D., 95, of Huntsville, died December 17, 2020.
Cockrell, Daniel Riley, 88, of Athens, died January 3, 2021.
Comer, Gene Edward, 83, of Huntsville, died December 24, 2020.
Compton, Eugene T., 87, of Huntsville, died April 11, 2021.
Cucarola, Gerald A., 70, of Madison, died January 12, 2021.
Dodd, Kenneth A., 93, of Arab, died December 13, 2020.
Glover, James C. (Jim), 93, of Huntsville, died December 8, 2020.
Graham, Ronald Jonathan, of Huntsville, died January 20, 2021.
Griffith, J. R., III, 84, of Huntsville, died February 15, 2021.
Hallisey, Harold W (Bill)., 86, of Huntsville, died December 6, 2020. **(MRA Member)**
Harrelson, James Curtis, 94, of Huntsville, died December 29, 2020.
Harris, Corene H., 87, of Huntsville, died February 4, 2021.
Helms, Curtis Ray, 92, of Gainesville, VA, died January 11, 2021.
Henson, Bobby Bart, 86, of Huntsville, died March 14, 2021.
Hoag, Phillip Charles, 85, of Acworth, GA, died January 13, 2021.
Hollis, Joe M., 89, of Huntsville, died April 27, 2021.
Howard, Gladys Jones, 90, of Huntsville, died January 1, 2021.
Jacques, Robert (Bob) T., 80, of Huntsville, died April 28, 2021.
Jenkins, Terro James (Jim), 85, of Huntsville, died December 1, 2020.
Jones, Jess Harold Joseph, 85, of Huntsville, died January 27, 2021.
Krome, Mark, 52, of Madison, died January 17, 2021.
Lawson, Eugene (Gene) Kyle, 88, of Huntsville, died January 8, 2021.
LeMay, Jackie, 97, of Huntsville, died April 28, 2021.
Marshall, William Robert (Bob), 88, of Pass Christian, MS, died December 1, 2020.
McEuen, James (Jim) Louis, 83, of Huntsville, died January 9, 2021.
Mitchell, Walt, 85, of Arab, died May 11, 2021 **(MRA Member)**
Nicholas, David Patrick, 78, of Huntsville, died February 9, 2021.



OBITUARIES (Continued)

- Roundtree**, James Wylie, 87, of Huntsville, died January 1, 2021.
- Rudolphi**, Michael, 72, of Scottsboro, died March 16, 2021.
- Saunders**, Jerry Morgan, 89, of Huntsville, died December 26, 2020.
- Simon**, Erwin Hugo, 88, of Huntsville, died March 18, 2021.
- Smith**, Earnest Charles, b.k.a “EC Smith”, 89, of Huntsville, died February 13, 2021.
- Spencer**, Robert (Bob) Lewis, 90, of Huntsville, died January 6, 2021.
- Taylor**, Roy Albert, 86, of Huntsville, died January 9, 2021.
- Tepool**, Ron, 81, of Huntsville, died March 21, 2021.
- Turner**, Sandra, 84, of Athens, died February 15, 2021. **(MRA Member)**
- Vaughan**, William (Bill) W., 90 of Huntsville, died December 23, 2020. **(MRA Member)**
- Waite**, Jack Hunter, Sr., 92, of Huntsville died December 24, 2020. **(MRA Member)**
- Wales**, William (Bill) Wallace, 88, of Huntsville, died January 3, 2021.
- Willoughby**, Grover Cleveland, 88, of Athens, died March 14, 2021.

NASA/MSFC Retiree Association

P. O. Box 4492

Huntsville, AL 35815

MRA OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, PAST PRESIDENTS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS (with e-mail addresses)

OFFICERS:

President: Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu

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Treasurer: Gray Settle, gsettle@gmail.com

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Editor's note: If you have articles of interest, photographs or suggestions for this newsletter, please contact me at 256-519-6533, or e-mail: Bjeanlee@aol.com Jean Lee, Newsletter Editor