



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

AUGUST 2023 ISSUE



QUARTERLY MRA LUNCHEON

TUESDAY, Sept. 12, 2023 THE LEDGES
Social & Registration: 11-11:45; Lunch: 11:45 - 12:15; Business & Speaker 12:15 - 1:00 p.m.

Menu: Slow-Cooked Pot Roast with Garlic Mashed Potatoes, & Vegetable Medley. Dinner Rolls, Coffee & Tea. Dessert: Flourless Chocolate Torte
Cost: \$35.00 per person

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than noon on **Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023** at benniejacks@att.net, or cell phone: 256.603.0894. A 72-hour cancellation notice is required by The Ledges. **No shows will be expected to pay for meal.**



PROGRAM SPEAKER:

DR. JAN DAVIS

TOPIC:

**HER NEWLY-RELEASED
BOOK:
“ AIR BORN”**

Former Astronaut and Space Industry Leader Jan Davis needs no introduction to MRA members. She is our hometown hero.

Jan will share with us her inspiration and motivation to write a book about her and her father's love for aviation. In her newly-released book "Air Born," you can join in on a flight through history as Jan Davis relates her father's heroic service and draws connections between his combat missions and her own spaceflights.

Discover the in's and out's of pilot training in the 1940's alongside her father, Ben Smotherman, and bear witness to his harrowing capture, interrogation, and imprisonment at Stalag Luft III. Rejoice with the POW's as World War II finally ends and the prisoners are returned home to continue pursuing their life's goals.

Shadow Jan Davis as she navigates a career characterized by space exploration, scientific experimentation, and phenomenal feats of engineering. And draw inspiration from the intersection of two completely different yet uniquely connected worlds brought together by a common link of family and flying.

Books will be available for purchase and Jan will autograph the books as well.

Message from The President:

It is hard to believe summer is about over and all the kids or grandkids are back in school. This has been a great time for MRA. The long-awaited ground breaking for the Rocket Park and the Space Exploration Memorial took place on August 3rd. Rick Chappell and his team continue to do a great job of leading the effort to make the Memorial a reality. Thanks to all of you who supported the historic event. Fundraising continues and your donations are needed to complete the project.

Jody Singer, MSFC Center Director, retired at the end of July after a 38-year career. Jody has done a phenomenal job leading the Center during a difficult and historic time. Under her leadership, MSFC completed the maiden launch of the SLS System, which spent nearly 25 Days orbiting the moon and checking out all the systems needed to return humans to the moon. Jody also led the way bringing in the Human Landing System Program to MSFC. Let's all congratulate Jody on a great career and welcome her to MRA.

We continue to give scholarships to a few deserving young people but there are many more that we would like to be able to help. As one of my old mentors, Mike Rudolphi, would say, "keep a going."

I look forward to seeing each one of you at the luncheon at the Ledges on September 12. Our own Jan Davis will be the guest speaker. Please come celebrate with us, see old friends, and enjoy some great fellowship. Also, I encourage everyone who knows someone who has retired from MSFC to contact them and get them involved with MRA. The doors open at 11:00 with lunch being served at 11:45.

Steve Cash

MSFC RETIREE BADGES

To obtain a MSFC retiree badge or visitor badge, you are required to go to the visitor center at gate 9 and register your current driver's license in order to get on base to get your badge updated/issued. However, you first need to call 256.544.3693 to get an appointment or send an email to Prapaipit Hughes at prapaipit.hughes@nasa.gov to get rebadged. Don't go on site without having an appointment because they will take your expired badge and will not give it back to you!

Submitted by: MSFC Protective Services Office

INCREASE IN 2024 MEMBERSHIP DUES

Membership dues for 2024 are due beginning January 1, 2024, 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 lunch.

While membership dues have remained constant for many years, and with the increase in administrative costs of newsletter printing and mailings, guest speakers' meals and honorariums, and technical support to the MRA website and honor roll, the Board has reviewed the dues. In addition, while MRA is supporting a UAH Endowed Scholarship, the Scholarship Committee is exploring opportunities to expand scholarships to USSRC Space Camps, Alabama A&M, Drake State, and others. A portion of the additional dues will allow MRA to play a role in funding scholarships to promote space careers for young deserving students. **The Board voted to raise the dues to \$50 per year beginning January 1, 2024.**

Membership in the Association is open to former MSFC and other NASA Center civil service 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 256-682-0441 so we can keep our records up to date.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS (Since last Newsletter)

Leigh Anne McMahon (06/07/23)

John E. Noel (6/14/23)

James L. Reuter (7/3/23)

Larry D. Frederick (7/3/23)

Jamie Bramlett (7/11/23)

G. Patrick Molloy (7/24/23)

Linda L. Brewster (07/31/23)

SPACE EXPLORATION MEMORIAL (GROUNDBREAKING)!!!!!!!!!!



On August 3, the official groundbreaking for the renovation of the Rocket Park, which included the construction of the Space Exploration Memorial, took place at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. Led by USSRC CEO, Kimberly Robinson, the speakers included Congressman Dale Strong, Madison County Commission Chairman, Mac McCutcheon and MRA Past President Rick Chappell. There were more than 100 people in attendance at the construction site including many MRA members as well as MSFC Acting Center Director, Joseph Pelfrey. The completion date for the memorial and honor roll is set for **March of 2024**.

To date, contributions to the creation of the memorial total \$850,000 of the \$1,000,000 needed to complete the job and the MRA is working with individuals and organizations to reach this goal in the next few months.

This is your memorial with your story about your life as a Space Explorer in Huntsville and your contribution to the history of this most unique city in the history of world exploration! **Please help reach the goal by donating.** Visit www.marshallretirees.org or use the donation form enclosed.

MRA SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Thanks to the members of MRA, over \$18,000 has been provided to local students for university scholarships, internships and attendance at STEM camps since 2015. Membership generosity has helped MRA achieve its goal of providing incentives to deserving students to promote space related careers.

In June, MRA provided support to Oakwood University's Camp Oaks. This year over 60 local K-8 students attended the camp. Camp Oaks is a science, technology, engineering, arts and math camp. Students participated in activities including: optical robots,

mimic robots, electronic birds and a physics-based skateboard park.



MRA has an endowed scholarship at UAH. Areas for additional funding of scholarships are being sought by the MRA Board of Directors to include Alabama A&M, Drake State, and USSRC Space Camp. The MRA Scholarship Committee includes Jim Turner, Chair, and members Gene Goldman and Lybrease Woodard.



Retirees of the Space Sciences Laboratory meet each month.

Pictured (L-R): Caroline Wang, Bill Snoddy, Larry Russell, Jim Fountain, Ron White, Jerry Fishman, Rick Chappell, Roger Kroes, Ann Whitaker, Harry Atkins

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Skylab Program Continues.....

If you have not had the opportunity to participate in any of the panel discussions this year celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Skylab, you are invited to attend the final celebratory event on **September 29th**. An informal dinner is planned with two of the three remaining astronauts in attendance. It has been 50 years since the MSFC-managed mission. Come celebrate with us. For more information, contact Jack Stokes at: jackstokes1962@gmail.com, or visit the USSRC website.

MRA WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA ((Update))

Please remember that the current MRA newsletter as well as previous newsletters are archived at www.marshallretirees.org and available for viewing.

If you have a group of colleagues that meet regularly, snap a photo and send to Bennie Jacks, administrator for the Facebook page. If you know of a retiree that has received special recognition, please share that information as well.

The Memorial database and the “Stories” page of the website continue to be updated. Biographical information for former and current MSFC personnel and stories are added regularly. Submissions may be made through the website. Alternatively, biographical information and stories may be submitted by email to marshallspaceexplorers@gmail.com or to gsettle@gmail.com This is the preferred alternative for submitting stories with pictures.

Fundraising for the Memorial continues and contributions may be submitted through the website (www.marshallretirees.org) or direct mail (donation form included in this newsletter). Donors are added to MRA website, with permission.

Below are the MRA websites addresses:

www.marshallretirees.org

www.facebook.com/marshallretirees

www.facebook.com/spaceexplorershsv

MSFC Retiree and Community Advocate Recognized by Naming Greenway in Her Honor



MSFC Retiree Opal Meek was honored recently by the City Council and Mayor Battle for her unceasing dedication to the City and the community. Specifically, she has fought to clean up neighborhoods in District 1. The resolution noted that she is an advocate for her neighbors and a link of communication between them and city government.

District 1 Councilman stated that “every district needs an Opal.” Opal retired from the Astrionics Laboratory in 1999 after 42 years of service to ABMA and then NASA beginning in 1960. A new greenway and walking trail on the north side of the city will be named the Meek Greenway, honoring her.

In addition to recognizing Opal for the achievement, we also recognize her as a significant contributor to this newsletter over the years. Opal provides information on 99% of the obituaries that are published in this newsletter each quarter. We thank her for her years of support to MRA and congratulate her on this honor. We can look forward to walking on the Meek Greenway when it is completed.

UAH Library Special Collections and Archives

Do you have boxes of Marshall files, photographs, etc.? Please do not let these end up in the dumpster when you are no longer with us. Many have donated their papers to the Special Collections Department located at the UAH Library. Reagan Grimsley heads this department and will be glad to pick up any collections that you wish to donate. He also urges you to contact him and visit the archives and vault to see first hand the great job they are doing to preserve space history.

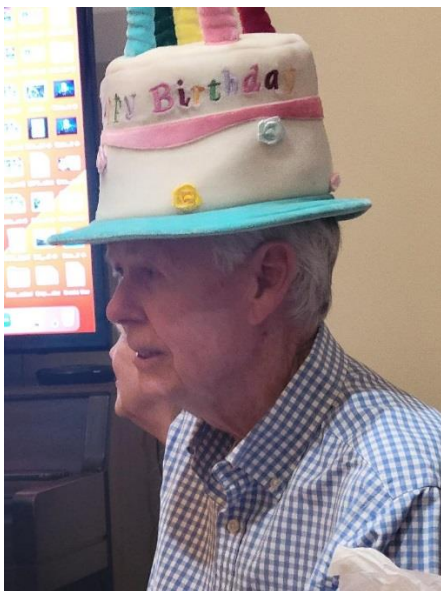
Also, put this information with your important papers. You may contact him at: Reagan Grimsley, 256.824.5781, email: Reagan.grimsley@uah.edu.

USSRC Recognizes MRA Member and USSRC Docent Skeet Vaughn on his 94th Birthday



MRA member and USSRC Docent Skeet Vaughn was recognized recently by USSRC on their Facebook page on the occasion of his 94th birthday. The post states: “He worked on the Miss Baker mission in the early days of the space program. You can find more information about Miss Baker and talk with him face to face by visiting the USSRC.” Congratulations on your 94th Birthday Skeet!!!!

MRA Past President and Project Manager for Space Exploration Memorial Rick Chappell Celebrates his 80th Birthday



MRA friends, family, neighbors and colleagues gathered in June to celebrate Rick’s 80 birthday.

MRA is grateful to Rick for his dedication to MRA and to the building of a memorial to recognize past and future space explorers.

Congratulations Rick on reaching his milestone birthday. 80 and counting.

MSFC Personnel Office Holds Semi-Annual Luncheon



Left to Right: Jim Bramblett, Camille Velvet, Danny Hightower, Judy (Mann) Martin, and Mack Blackman

Retirees of the Marshall Personnel Office (later Human Capital) met at Logan's recently for their semi-annual luncheon. Approximately 20 people were in attendance. If you or someone you know is interested in joining this group, contact: Danny Hightower at: dhigh@charter.net .

Do You Miss Reading the *Marshall Star*?

If you miss reading the Marshall Star, it is now available on line at: www.nasa.gov/centers/marshall/about/star. Not only are current issues available, but many past issues are archived and available on this site.

USSRC UPCOMING EVENTS

While we don't have space available in this newsletter to publish all events going on at the Space and Rocket Center, you are encouraged to visit the website for upcoming events that might interest you and your family. Visit: www.rocketcenter.com



OBITUARIES

- Adair**, Billy (Mack), 88, of Huntsville, died July 25, 2023.
Caldwell, Edward L., Sr., 93, of Huntsville, died June 6, 2023.
Cavnar, Sandra Nell, 78, of Decatur, died July 24, 2023.
Edwards, Willard “Ed”, 92, of Kelso, TN died June 3, 2023.
Forney, Margaret Ann, 98, of Huntsville, AL died April 24, 2023
Hagood, Carlos D., of Decatur, died June 26, 2023.
Hazel, Charlotte Sue Bates, 79, of Guntersville, died June 23, 2023.
Howard, Eschol “Bud”, 95, of Huntsville, died June 26, 2023.
Jones, Joseph M. (Joe), 92, of New Market, died July 29, 2023.
Meyer, Eloise Daniel, 96, of Huntsville, died July 29, 2023.
Miller, Jimmy L., 88, of Huntsville, died August 21, 2023.
Pearson, Steven D., 64, of Madison, died June 12, 2023
Puckett, Thomas Earl, 89, of Huntsville, died August 9, 2023.
Reinartz, Stanley R., 90, of Huntsville, died August 6, 2023.
Shafer, Charles F., 80, of Huntsville, died August 19, 2023.
Stern, Henry (Hank), 94, of Huntsville, AL died June 5, 2023
Thompson, Jeffrey F., 91, of Huntsville, died June 17, 2023.
Thompson, Mack, 85, of Huntsville, died August 3, 2023.
Walker, James D. (Dan), 93, of Huntsville, died July 14, 2023.

Note: Most of the obituaries listed above are obtained from local sources. If you are aware of retiree obituaries from surrounding areas, please let the newsletter editor know so that it can be passed along to our members.

NASA/MSFC Retiree Association

P. O. Box 4492

Huntsville, AL 35815

MRA OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, PAST PRESIDENTS, AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

OFFICERS:

President: Steve Cash, scash4@bellsouth.net

Vice-President: Gene Goldman, gagoldman@bwxt.com

Recording Secretary: Melissa McGrath, mccgrath1915@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gray Settle, gsettle@gmail.com

Community Outreach & Events Coordinator: Bennie Jacks, benniejacks@att.net

BOARD MEMBERS:

Jim Turner, n2250x@gmail.com Jean Payne, clovis.payne@yahoo.com

Charles Scales, chscales@aol.com Bobby Watkins, bobby.watkins@barrios.com

Lybrease Woodard, lrfwoodard@gmail.com Mark King, MisterMarcus62@gmail.com

Jack Stokes, jackstokes1962@gmail.com Annette Tingle, tinga102022@outlook.com

PAST PRESIDENTS/STANDING BOARD MEMBERS:

Ed Buckbee, edbuckbee@gmail.com Brooks Moore, brooks.mo@comcast.net

Jim Splawn, jjsplawn@comcast.net Parker Counts, parker@countsconsultants.com

Gerald Smith, gerald.smith6@comcast.net Linda Posey, lbposey@comcast.net

Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu Melissa McGrath, mccgrath1915@gmail.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Membership: Mary Spaulding, md_spaulding@comcast.net Program: Bobby Watkins, bobby.watkins@barrios.com

Newsletter: Jean Lee, Bjeanlee@aol.com

Memorial Project Manager: Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu

Memorial History: Gray Settle, gsettle@gmail.com

Scholarship Committee: Jim Turner, n2250x@gmail.com