



NASA/MSFC Retirees Association

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

NOVEMBER 2023 ISSUE



QUARTERLY MRA LUNCHEON

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

***Menu: Roasted Turkey with Cornbread Dressing,
Cranberry Sauce, Sweet Potatoes with Pecans and
Marshmallows. Dinner Rolls, Coffee & Tea.***

Dessert: Flourless Chocolate Cake

Cost: \$35.00 per person

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than noon on **Wednesday, Dec. 6, 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

The December Meeting is reserved for fellowship without a Program Speaker.

MRA member and artist Caroline Wang will give a 7 to 10- minute presentation on her recently published art book showcasing space art and its connection to space exploration stories that encompass her complete art collection. She will give away two of the books as door prizes at the luncheon. Caroline has been a supporter of the Space Exploration Memorial by donating a portion of her proceeds from the sale of her space art to the Memorial.

Message from the MRA President.....

What a great year NASA and MRA have had! It is hard to believe another year is about in the records book. One year ago, we flew a historic Artemis 1 mission that you all helped to lay the groundwork for. This year, we brought in over 20 new members to MRA. Rick Chappell and his team of MRA volunteers led the way in getting the Space Exploration Memorial underway with the groundbreaking in August. MRA has a lot to be proud of, and we give thanks for the many friends and blessings we have had this year. We lost several of our team this year, and we will mourn their loss and celebrate knowing them and what they meant to us.

I want to invite everyone who knows someone who has retired from MSFC to get involved with MRA. We continue to give scholarships to deserving young people, but there are many more that we would like to be able to help. We urge everyone to get involved and support the next generation of space explorers.

I look forward to seeing each one of you at the Ledges on December 12 for a time of good fellowship with old and new friends. The doors open at 11 with lunch being served at 11:45. Bring a friend!

See you in December.

Steve Cash

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 luncheon on December 12, 2023.

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.

NEW MEMBERS (Since Last Newsletter)

Robert Suggs (9/9/23)

Mike Ball (10/2/23)

James W. Thomas (10/2/23)

Keith Henson (10/13/23)

Update/Status of Space Exploration Memorial

Construction has begun and will include the redesign of the overall Rocket Park, the return of the refurbished rockets that show the history of rocket development in Huntsville by the Army and NASA, and the creation of the Space Exploration Memorial.

The living Memorial Wall will include the engraved names of all MSFC employees, past and present in approximate chronological order of the hiring date. To ensure that your name is included “PLEASE GO ONLINE AND VERIFY THAT YOUR NAME IS IN THE DATABASE AND ADD YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION TO YOUR NAME BY CLICKING ON “VIEW DETAILS.” (www.marshallretirees.org.)

The list of names has already been delivered to Alabama Metal Art, who is now making the engraved panels. The online Space Explorers Honor Roll will be available on a kiosk beside the memorial wall and will have the individual career information and stories as well as the location of your name on the memorial wall.

The completion date of the memorial and the redesigned Rocket Park overall is mid-March 2024. A celebration will follow.

To date, more than **\$950,000** have been raised and we are in reach of our goal. MRA members, other retirees and families as well as the City of Huntsville, Madison County and the Alabama Legislative delegation have been most generous. Individual personal contributions range from \$100 to \$25,000. Thanks to all who have supported this project.

If you have not made a donation, there is a link on the MRA website to make donations which go into a 501(c)3 tax deductible restricted fund for the Space Exploration Memorial in the USSRC Education Foundation.

As you plan your end-of-year giving for 2023, consider a donation to the Memorial. A donation form is attached to the newsletter for direct mailing.

35TH ANNUAL VON BRAUN MEMORIAL DINNER



(Left to Right) Jan Zielinski, Rick Chappell, Bennie Jacks, Brenda Chappell, Jack Stokes and John Reaves

The 35th Annual Von Braun Memorial Dinner was held on October 25, 2023, at the von Braun Center, Saturn Ballroom. The Huntsville Chapter of the National Space Club sponsored the annual event and proceeds from the dinner go to student scholarships and STEM education activities.

The Dr. Wernher von Braun Space Flight Trophy was awarded to the NASA Space Launch System Program Team for the successful Artemis I Launch. The Jack Lee Community Service Award went to Andy Johnston, of Jacobs Technologies. Andy knew and worked with Jack on community events for many years. Local journalist, Lee Roop, received the Communications Award for his coverage of space related events for over four decades.

MRA members have been loyal supporters of this event through the years.

Having Difficulty Reaching OPM?

The best days to call OPM at 888-767-6738 are on Thursdays and Fridays, except the first couple of days of the month. It is highly recommended that retirees contact OPM via email at retire@opm.gov with specific questions. OPM employees rotate off of phone call duty to full time duty answering emails. The average wait time for an email response is two (2) days.

PERSEVERENCE HAS LANDED AT USSRC

Mars 2020 mission landed at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center with opening of the “Roving with Perseverance” roadshow in August. The Rocket Center is the only location in the Southeast to host the roadshow, which includes full-size “twin” models of NASA’s Perseverance rover and the history-making Ingenuity Mars Helicopter. The Rocket Center is the first site in the country to receive an enhanced exhibit that includes a model of the Mars Ascent Vehicle. Stop by to see this exhibit which will be on display through February 2024.

BRIG. GEN. ROBERT STEWART HONORED

The City of Huntsville honored Brig. Gen. Robert (Bob) Stewart by changing the name of the Eagle Drive in Commings Research Park West to Bob Stewart Drive. Bob is a retired astronaut and a member of MRA. He participated in mankind’s first untethered operation from a spacecraft in flight. Congratulations!

NASA CELEBRATES 65 YEARS



We’re celebrating NASA’s 65th orbit around the sun. We’ve seen a lot since we opened for business on October 1, 1958, and there are so many more inspiring discoveries and benefits to humanity yet to come.

Happy 65th Birthday, NASA!



OBITUARIES

- Adkins**, William Dan, 88, of Huntsville, died November 11, 2023
Albright, Eddie Ray, 90, of Hampton Cove, died September 25, 2023.
Bailey, John Cecil, 88, of Huntsville, died September 19, 2023.
Berkebile, Marlin (John), 95, of Petersburg, TN, died October 13, 2023.
Bledsoe, Theodore T., 92, of Huntsville, died October 17, 2023.
Cornelius, Charles Sylvester, III, 86, of Huntsville, died October 13, 2023.
DeHaye, Robert Francis, 81, of Huntsville, died November 5, 2023.
Epsy, Patrick Newton, 87, of Huntsville, died September 9, 2023.
Goode, Paul Leo, 80, of Athens, died October 9, 2023.
Hood, Jack B., 84, of Madison, died September 10, 2023.
Howell, Randal Lee, 70, of Fayetteville, TN, died July 27, 2023.
Jackson, Franklin Jerome, 86, of Huntsville, died August 24, 2023.
Jackson, Walter Wayne, 91, of Brownsboro, died September 10, 2023.
Kitchens, Phillip Hudgins, 78, of Huntsville, died September 7, 2023.
Lewis, Elmer Hoyt (Red), 99, of Huntsville, died September 1, 2023.
Miller, Jimmy Lynn, 88, of Huntsville, died August 21, 2023.
Perkinson, Don Thomas, 81, of Huntsville, died September 7, 2023
Pessin, Myron A. (Mike), 91, of Huntsville, died September 11, 2023.
Roberts, William (Bill), 88, of Huntsville, died August 25, 2023.
Woods, Orville, H., 87, of Huntsville, died September 9, 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. Jean Lee, Bjeanlee@aol.com, or 256.508.4203.

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

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Lybrease Woodard, lrfwoodard@gmail.com

Mark King, MisterMarcus62@gmail.com

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Annette Tingle, tinga102022@outlook.com

PAST PRESIDENTS/STANDING BOARD MEMBERS:

Ed Buckbee, edbuckbee@gmail.com

Brooks Moore, brooks.mo@comcast.net

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Gerald Smith, gerald.smith6@comcast.net

Linda Posey, lbposey@comcast.net

Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu

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