



NASA/MSFC Retirees Association

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

MAY 2025 ISSUE



QUARTERLY MRA LUNCHEON

Tuesday, June 10, 2025 The Ledges

Social & Registration 11 – 11:45; Lunch. 11:45 – 12:15; Business & Speaker 12:15 – 1:00 p.m.

Menu:

Chicken Marsala with Red Roasted Potatoes, Steamed Broccoli, Dinner Rolls, Coffee & Tea.

Dessert: Lemon Meringue Pie

Cost: \$35.00 per person

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than **Noon, Thursday, June 5, 2025**, 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 meals.

PROGRAM SPEAKER

Mike Ward

**Senior Vice President of Government & Public Affairs for
the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce**

**Topic: Economic Development in this Area, Infrastructure
of the City, and the President's Budget and its Impact on
North Alabama**



Michael Ward is the Senior Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for the Huntsville/Madison County Chamber of Commerce and has worked for the Chamber since 1991.

He previously worked for the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and for Jim Walter Companies/Walter Industries. He is an alumnus of Leadership Huntsville/Madison County Class 6 (1993), DoD's Joint Civilian Orientation Conference

(JCOC) class 74 (2007), the Army War College National Security Summit class of 2021 and Leadership Alabama (2024). He serves on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Military Stability Foundation.

Ward received his bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Alabama. He earned his designation as a *Certified Chamber Executive (CCE)* in 2017. He is the author of the book "Shaping History" the story of the economic development of Huntsville and the parallel development of UAH and the Cummings Research Park.

He is also the son of Bob Ward, the former editor of the *Huntsville Times*, who covered the space program in the early years and wrote the book: *Dr. Space, The Life of Wernher von Braun*.

Message from the President:

What a great spring MRA has had. Over 500 attended the ribbon cutting of the Wall of Honor at the USSRC. The Wall of Honor is beautiful and a tribute to your hard work at MSFC. You must come to see the Wall and find your name among the thousands of names. I found my name on Panel 13. It was fun to find old friends and wonderful memories came flowing back of my experiences at Marshall. Come and bring your family.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with the Human Rover Challenge again this year. Your service means a lot to the community, and it's exciting to see our future young engineers at work.

The Board of MRA has voted to endow a scholarship at Alabama A&M University. This will happen over a 5-year arrangement to raise \$25,000. A portion of your dues will be used to fund the endowment, along with contributions. If you wish to participate, send your check made payable to MRA and designate Alabama A&M Scholarship Fund. For more information, contact Jim Turner at 256.417.7915.

Mark your calendars to attend the MSFC 65th anniversary celebration on July 19, at the Orion Theater. More information will follow. This will take the place of NASA in the Park this year.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the June 10th luncheon at the Ledges. If you have not paid your dues for 2025, you may pay them at the door. See you there.

Steve Cash

OPM IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND ON-LINE CONTACTS:

Taxes: Annuitant Express, change in tax withholding (1-800-409-6738)

Federal Long-Term Care: 1-800-582-3337; www.LTCFEDS.COM

Thrift Savings Plan: 1-877-968-3778; www.tsp.gov

Social Security: 1-800-772-1213; www.ssa.gov

Report Death of Employee/Spouse: 1-888-767-6738; retire@opm.gov

Point of Contact for MSFC Retirees: Debbie Allen:

256.544.7536; Deborah.a.allen@nasa.gov; allenda0927@gmail.com

2025 MEMBERSHIP DUES

It's past the time to pay dues for 2025. As you recall, dues have increased to \$50. Dues 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 on June 10, 2025 at the Ledges. To check your membership status, check the address label on this newsletter that you receive in the mail.

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. Your membership is important to help fund scholarships to deserving students in the engineering field through local colleges and trade schools.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MRA Luncheons

September 9, 2025

December 2025

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

(Since February Newsletter)

Lisa Smith John Hanson Bruce Tiller
Stacy Counts Oberman Robert D. (Daryl) Woods
Charlie T. Jones Lynne Berry Jannifer (Jan) Matthews
Sherry Ann Jennings James Cannon

RIBBON CUTTING & DEDICATION OF THE SPACE EXPLORATION WALL OF HONOR



After six years of dreaming, designing, redesigning, fundraising and many setbacks including Covid, the Space Exploration Wall of Honor became a reality on April 17, 2025, with a ribbon cutting at the USSRC Rocket Park, with community leaders, previous Center Directors and retirees and families in attendance. Many thanks to the MRA members, Marshall retirees and their families and community leaders who contributed more than \$1M to make this Wall a reality.

The Wall contains the names of more than 21,000 NASA employees who have created spacecraft and rockets that enabled American's space exploration leadership over the past 75 years.



L to R: County Commissioner Mac McCutcheon, Mayor Tommy Battle, Wall of Honor Project Chair Rick Chappell, CEO of USSRC Kimberly Robinson, Past Center Directors Jody Singer and Robert Lightfoot, Center Director Joseph Pelfrey, Past Center Directors Patrick Scheuermann, Todd May, David King and Art Stephenson.

RIBBON CUTTING & DEDICATION OF THE SPACE EXPLORATION WALL OF HONOR

(continued)

The man behind the plan for this Wall of Honor is Rick Chappell. His passion for the wall to recognize space explorers has been years in the planning. Rick carried this project through many challenges, including Covid, but he never wavered from reaching the goal. MRA is indebted to him for his perseverance, commitment and drive to see this project come to fruition. Many thanks Rick for bringing this project to completion. A project that will be enjoyed by future generations.

Memorial History Committee: Words cannot express our thanks to the members of this committee who started the unbelievable task of locating names of previous employees. They plowed through old telephone books, personnel records and personnel cards (used in the early days) to capture and the purge the name changes. Sandra Turner led this committee, with the help of many including Jean Payne, Barbara Shannon, Janice Young, Shirley Ellis, Linda Posey, Carol Byler, Jan Zielinski, Gray Settle and Annette Tingle. Gray took this information to the next level and established a Space Exploration Database that included the 21,000 names found and confirmed. Annette has spent and continues to spend many hours purging the names and adding bios to the database. None of this would have been possible with their hours, days, months and years of effort.

Fundraising Committee: A vision is just a vision unless funds can be found to bring it to a reality. Many MRA members and Community leaders were a part of bringing this vision to life. Many MRA members worked to fundraise for this project including Rick Chappell, Bennie Jacks, Brooks Moore, Jim Splawn, and Gene Goldman, as they reached out to the space industry and community leaders. Over \$1M was raised to fund this project.

Annual Space Exploration Celebration: Huntsville and Madison County has designated October of each year as “Space Exploration Month.” Stay tuned for more information on a Space Exploration Celebration in October, which will include adding more names to the Wall. There is room on the Wall to add 25 years of names. It is the plan that this annual event will serve as a reunion of space explorers and their families and an opportunity to share exciting memories with our colleagues.

RIBBON CUTTING & DEDICATION OF THE SPACE EXPLORATION WALL OF HONOR



Rick Chappell, Wall Project Manager



Center Directors Plaque



Homer Hickman & Jean Payne



Kenny & Libby Mitchell, Jean Lee, Mary Spaulding

MRA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



MRA Scholarship Chairman Jim Turner attended the UAH Scholarship Donor Breakfast in March where Tetiana Tymoshevske was recognized.

MRA has had an endowed scholarship with the University of Alabama in Huntsville for many years. In the past, UAH selected an engineering student to receive the MRA scholarship. This year, UAH was able to select two recipients!

Hailey Neal is an undergraduate Aerospace Engineering major. She plans on continuing her academic endeavors after receiving her Aerospace engineering degree by pursuing Masters and PhD degrees in Aerospace Engineering. She serves as a mentor for her high school robotics team, and she would like to work for NASA after the completion of her studies.

Tetiana Tymoshevska was also a recipient of the MRA scholarship again this year. She received the MRA scholarship last year as well. Tetiana is graduating from UAH this spring with her undergraduate degree in Aerospace Engineering. She is interested in advanced propulsion and plans to continue her studies by pursuing a Masters degree and a PhD degree at the University of Michigan this fall. Tetian was recognized at the recent MRA luncheon at the Ledges.

MRA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (cont'd)

This year the Marshall Space Flight Center is celebrating its 65th anniversary. However, MSFC is not the only great institution in Huntsville celebrating an anniversary. Alabama A&M University is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2025. In recognition of this momentous occasion, the MRA Scholarship committee and the MRA Board of Directors are pleased to announce that in February of this year, the MRA President, Steve Cash, signed an agreement with Alabama A&M University to initiate the process of establishing an endowed MRA scholarship with A&M. MRA will have five years to raise the funds necessary to establish the scholarship and to develop the criteria for the awarding of the scholarship by A&M. MRA believes this is a great step forward in increasing MRA's support of the development of the next generations of space explorers.

In the summer of 2024, the MRA again supported Oakwood University's Camp Oaks. Camp OAKS aims to be a premier STEAM camp dedicated to serving underserved children in the area. This transformative program provides engaging, hands-on experiences in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics for children ages 5-12. This past year, 65 children participated in Camp OAKS' eight-week summer program, exploring thematic units including Earth and Environment, Space and Aviation, Digital Frontiers, and Innovation and Design.



A portion of your membership dues is used to support these programs to inspire future generations.

NASA DOCENTS AT WORK



A visitor to the USSRC posted this photo on Facebook. She stated that her young son was named after his great grandfather, Raymond (Ray) Gause, who worked as a physicist at MSFC.

Imagine her excitement when they met NASA Docent Ron Paulus who knew him. “It was so special to share his memory with Ron.”

Thank you to Ron for his years of commitment to the NASA Emeritus Program.



School teacher Michelle Salehi organized the 2025 Challenger Family STEM night for the students at Challenger Elementary and Middle School and invited NASA docents to participate. Pictured here is Docent Ron Creel talking about his favorite subject, the Lunar Roving Vehicle (LRV) and giving the students an opportunity to drive it on the surface of the moon. Thank you Ron for sharing your passion for space exploration and inspiring young students to love and explore space.

MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER CELEBRATES 65 YEARS



2025 is a year of celebration for the Marshall Space Flight Center. Events are planned throughout the year. More information may be found at the following links:

<https://www.nasa.gov/marshall65/>

The highlight of the year will be on July 19th:

WHAT: Marshall's 65th Birthday Bash

WHEN: noon-5 p.m. on Saturday, July 19, 2025

WHERE: The Orion Amphitheater in Huntsville, AL

WHO: This is a free, community-sponsored event open to the public.

More details about this event are available at this link:

<https://www.nasa.gov/feature/marshalls-65th-birthday-bash/>

For more information contact: Hannan Maginot, Public Affairs Officer, Office of Communications, 256.932.1937, hannah.l.maginot@nasa.gov.

ASTRO SPACELAB MISSIONS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION JUNE 19-20, 2025 USSRC

The Astro Restoration Project or “ARP” is a 501c3 not-for-profit, all volunteer organization that promotes STEM education through restoration of the Astro payload, which flew as part of the Spacelab Program on STS-35 and STS-67. ARP partnered with USSRC and are restoring Astro as part of a “living exhibit” in the atrium of the USSRC.

This year is a big year for Astro, as Astro-1 will be celebrating the 35th anniversary since it launched aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia and Astro-3 is celebrating the 30th anniversary of its launch aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavor.

To celebrate these milestones, ARP, in partnership with the USSRC, will be celebrating ASTRO Days at the USSRC on June 19 and 20, 2025. Events on June 19th are geared to the public, with special events on the 20th for those who worked Spacelab and the Astro missions.

Since MSFC was a huge part of these missions, please know that you are invited to participate in the celebration. Here is a link to the website which has the program of events and registration information. Website: Astro Restoration-Astro Celebration. For more information contact Maynette Smith:
mayette.smith@astrorestorationproject.org

HR 82 SIGNED INTO LAW BY PRESIDENT BIDEN

House Resolution 82 titled “Social Security Fairness Act of 2023,” was signed by President Biden on January 5, 2025, repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), effective for benefits payable after December 2023. This is a momentous win. The bill has been stuck in committees for many years with little hope for federal annuitants to receive their full Social Security benefits.

The Social Security Administration is in the process of implementing the laws. If you are affected by the law, you are encouraged to visit the SSA website for updates. <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>

MRA MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK

MRA has published its first ever membership handbook. The handbook contains information about the history of MRA, listing of leadership team, membership directory, and important contact numbers including OPM. The handbooks will be available at the June luncheon. If you are unable to attend, please contact Jean Lee, 256.508.4203, Bjeanlee@aol.com, or Mary Spaulding, 256.682.0441, md_spaulding@comcast.net, and a copy will be mailed to you. The handbook is for **MRA Internal Use Only**, and should not be shared with outside organizations.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS RESUME AT UAH

An effort to conduct oral interviews and recordings of Marshall retirees began in 2006 and had a break in this project. The effort between MRA and UAH Special Collections Division has resumed. This fits in with the MRA effort to establish a database of former Marshall employees.

If you would like more information or be willing to participate, please contact Jack Stokes at 256-468-2743 or email: jackstokes1962@gmail.com.

Volunteer Opportunities:

MRA needs the support of its members to achieve its goals and mission. Please share our skills and talents and enjoy working with fellow retirees. Listed here are some of the opportunities that need support:

- Newsletter:** Contributing writers to prepare articles for inclusion in the newsletter. Contact: Jean Lee, 256.508.4203, Bjeanlee@aol.com.
- Outreach:** Volunteers needs to staff booths and tables at special events in the community. Contact: Bennie Jacks, 256.603.0894, benniejacks@att.net.
- Database:** Help with maintaining the Space Explorers Database. Contact: Gray Settle, 256.682.0334, gsettle@gmail.com.

DR. WILLIAM R. LUCAS DIES AT THE AGE OF 102



Dr. William R. Lucas passed way at his home on February 10, 2025, at the age of 102. He was a charter member of MSFC, and held positions including Chief of the Materials Division, Director of the Propulsion and Vehicle Engineering Laboratory, Director of Program Development Directorate, Deputy Center Director and Center Director from 1974 to 1986. His complete bio can be found on the MRA website: marshallretirees.org.

As the Saturn/Apollo era was ending, the Marshall Center was vulnerable for closure. Dr. von Braun appointment Dr. Lucas to head up a new organization called the Program Development Directorate, with the goal to pursue a diversity of programs outside of the traditional propulsion systems role. Dr. Lucas conceived an organization that was classic in scope, structure and strategy and resulted in Marshall acquiring major programs, including LRV, ISS, HST. He served as Center Director for 12 years, and we are indebted to this leader who did so much to keep the doors open at Marshall during challenging times. Bill Sneed

Dr. Lucas was the longest serving Director of MSFC. He built an outstanding team to lead the Shuttle Program, Spacelab and the Hubble. In many ways, he was a tough task master demanding excellence of himself as well as from everyone that reported to him. As an engineer, I made many presentations to him and it was a rigorous and challenging process. Preparing for his presentations certainly prepared me for higher level presentations to NASA Headquarters and other Centers. He was a proud and devoted leader of the Marshall Center.

Gerald Smith



OBITUARIES

- Bailey**, Dennis Lee, 76, of Huntsville, died February 22, 2025.
Bayless, Syble Gayle, 78, of Priceville, died January 11, 2025.
Belton, Paul Dudley, 86 of Arab, died May, 30, 2020.
Butas, John P., 68, of Huntsville, died January 4, 2025.
Bishop, Gerald Glenn, 88, of Huntsville, died February 25, 2025.
Carey, William Theodore (Ted), Jr., 89 of Melbourne, FL, died January 21, 2025.
Chandler, Barbara Patton, 89, of Huntsville, died March 23, 2025.
Daughtry, James Harry, 92, of Huntsville, died March 16, 2025.
Gamble, Charles Louis, 67, of Bartlett, TN, died March 11, 2025.
Hall, Vanassa Von, 64, of Huntsville, died April 2, 2025.
Harwell, David Carden, 66, of Huntsville, died March 10, 2025.
Henderson, James Kirby, 87, of Madison, died February 25, 2025.
Howell, Joe Thomas (Joe Tom), 86, of Lester, AL, died April 4, 2025.
McPeak, Billy Joe, 85, of Chelsea, died May 5, 2025.
Miller, Bette Lou Ann, 86, of Huntsville, died February 8, 2025.
Naumann, Robert “Bob” Jordan, 89, of Huntsville, died February 8, 2025.
Price, Johnnie Mac “John”, 96, of Huntsville, died March 9, 2025.
Pride, Robert Ray, 88, of Huntsville, died February 9, 2025.
Raby, James E., 87, of Harvest, died March 11, 2025.
Reed, Leila Sutton, 81, of Huntsville, died March 3, 2025.
Thomas, John Wesley, 87, of Huntsville, died March 14, 2025.*
Taylor, Edgar Kent, 86, of Huntsville, died February 27, 2025.
Vaughn, Herbert (Herb) Walton, Jr., 92, of Huntsville, died March 10, 2025.

*Long time member of MRA and served on the Board of Directors for two terms.