



NASA/MSFC Retirees Association

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

AUGUST 2026 ISSUE

SPACE EXPLORERS' CELEBRATION

An Evening Among Legends of Space
presented by the U.S. Space & Rocket Center Education Foundation,
and the NASA/Marshall Retirees Association
to honor the Space Explorers and their families.

Friday, October 2, 2026

\$65 per person

4:30 PM APOLLO COURTYARD

*Open for guests to visit the
Space Exploration Wall of Honor*

5:30 PM RECEPTION & DINNER

Saturn V Hall

Featuring Maj. Gen. Charlie Bolden (Ret.)

*Astronaut and Former NASA Administrator
STS-61C; STS-31; STS-45; STS-60*



SCAN FOR TICKETS &
MORE INFORMATION

**Join us for the 2nd annual Space Explorers' Celebration on
October 2, 2026. See page 5 for more information. For MRA
reserve tables, contact: Bennie Jacks: 256.603.0894, or
benniejacks@att.net.**

QUARTERLY MRA LUNCHEON

*Tuesday, September 15, 2026
Valley Hill Country Club**

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

Menu:

*Garden Salad, Chicken Piccata with Rice Pilaf,
Vegetable Medley, Dinner Rolls, Coffee & Tea.
Dessert: Pecan or Fruit Cobbler with Chocolate Sauce
Costs: \$35.00*

****NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION***

Please RSVP to Bennie Jacks no later than **Noon, September 9, 2026** at benniejacks@att.net, or cell phone: 256.603.0894.

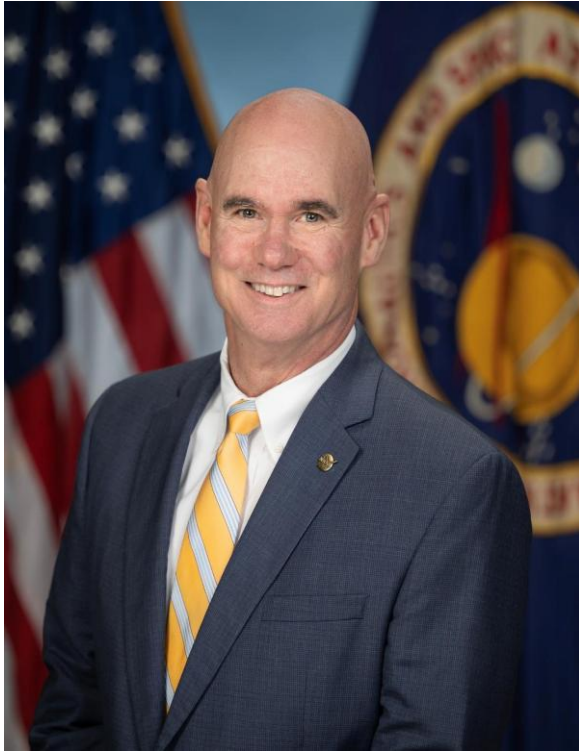
Help us avoid the long line in the entryway by purchasing your lunch ticket in advance here: <https://www.marshallretirees.org/product/quarterly-luncheon-ticket/>

A 72-hour cancellation notice is required by Valley Hill Country Club.
No shows are expected to pay for meals to MRA.

UPCOMING LUNCHEON IN 2026:

December 8, 2026 (The Ledges)

PROGRAM SPEAKER



**Bill Marks, Director of
Center Operations,
Marshall Space Flight
Center**

**Topic: Update on MSFC
Activities**

Marks leads an organization consisting of 92 civil servants and 437 contractors with an annual budget of approximately \$97 million. The office provides industrial labor relations, environmental engineering, occupational health, facility management, logistics and transportation, protective services, emergency management, and subordinate site operations.

Marks was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps and detailed to the Infantry in 1990. He served two tours in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, from 2005 to 2006. Marks has served in numerous staff and leadership roles throughout his career, from rifle platoon leader in the 25th Infantry Division to garrison commander of Redstone Arsenal, where he retired as a colonel in 2016.

Prior to his tenure at NASA, Marks worked in the private sector from 2016 to 2019 as an executive director for Geocent, a small aerospace and defense contractor in Huntsville.

Marks earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of South Alabama and a master's degree in public administration from Webster University and a master's degree in strategic studies from the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Letter from the President.....

Happy end of summer to the MRA. I hope you are surviving the hot weather and looking forward to fall, which will bring two exciting MRA events.

Please join us for our **quarterly luncheon on September 15** at Valley Hill Country Club with speaker Bill Marks, Director of Center Operations at Marshall.

Then plan to join us for the 2nd annual **Space Explorers' Celebration (SEC)** in the Saturn V Hall at the Space and Rocket Center, where we will add new names to the Wall of Honor, and enjoy our keynote speaker Charles Bolden, former NASA Administrator and astronaut, at the dinner to follow. This is a relatively informal event, appropriate for family and friends. The SEC is a signature event for the MRA, and the Wall of Honor is our legacy to the thousands of people who have made Huntsville the "Rocket City."

The Wall of Honor contains over 21,000 names, but of those thousands, only about 1,300 have entered their biographical information in the database that accompanies the Wall. If you have not yet entered your own information in the database, please do so. It can be easily done at the link on the Marshall Retirees Association web page: www.marshallretirees.org.

Meantime, please stay up to date on current happenings on our newly revived Facebook page, where you will find pictures and obituaries in between newsletters. Search for the "Marshall Retirees Association" group page and join.

Details about how to purchase tickets for both the luncheon and SEC can be found on page 5 in the newsletter. Please plan to join us for these two important events!

Best wishes!

Melissa McGrath

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

Space Exploration Wall of Honor and Space Explorers' Celebration

October 2, 2026

Space Explorers' Wall of Honor:

As most of you recall, the Space Exploration Wall of Honor was completed and dedicated on April 17, 2025 at USSRC. The Wall contains over 21,000 names of current and former NASA permanent employees, plus the names of those who initially worked at the Army Ballistic Missile Command. A kiosk located at the Wall will allow visitors to search for names and find their location on the Wall, as well as find information on the Space Explorers Database about the individual's career at NASA.

Space Explorers' Month:

To coincide with the dedication, the City of Huntsville and the Madison County Commission proclaimed October as Space Exploration Month to be celebrated annually. To celebrate, the first Space Explorers' Celebration dinner was held on October 1, 2025 following the adding of addition names to the Wall. The United Nations has declared that October 4-10 is World Space Week each year. It is a most appropriate month for celebrating exploration considering that we remember Columbus' first voyage to the Americas in October. In addition, 2026 is the "Year of the Explorer" at the USSRC.

Space Explorers' Celebration and Dinner:

In 2026, the tradition will continue on October 2, with a ceremony at the Wall at 4:30 p.m. to add the names of new permanent employees at MSFC. Following the ceremony, colleagues, friends and families will participate in a dinner in the Davidson Center.

This year's featured speaker will be Maj. Gen. Charles Frank Bolden, Jr., (USMC-Ret.), former Space Shuttle Commander and NASA Administrator. His talk will focus on "Space Exploration, A Family Adventure" and will remember the role that his family members played in supporting his amazing career. We anticipate an attendance of 500-1,000 explorers and families. Dinner tickets can be purchased for \$65.00 on the USSRC Education Foundation website:

<https://rocketcenterfoundation.org/space-explorers/> and the MRA website:

<https://www.marshallretirees.org/>. Proceeds from the dinner will be used to support the addition of names to the Wall and its maintenance.

40th Anniversary of the STS-45 Space Shuttle Mission:

This year is also the 40th anniversary of the selection of the Crew of the STS-45 Space Shuttle mission of which Charlie Bolden was commander. Charlie and Rick Chappell have invited the crew members of that mission to Huntsville for a reunion on the same weekend. Plans are to formally add the names of the STS-45 crew to the Space Explorers Database on the kiosk at the Wall of Honor, since they worked together with MSFC on that ATLAS-1 spacelab mission.

You will have an opportunity to talk with them at a "Meet and Greet" beginning at 2:00p.m. in the Atrium of the USSRC. They will also be attending the dedication at the Wall as well as the dinner that follows.

Space Exploration Wall of Honor and Space Explorers' Celebration

October 2, 2026 (continued)

Book Signings:

Three well-known space writers, Mel Croft, John Youskauskas and Valerie Neal who have written the book "Come Fly With Us" about the role of the payload specialists on missions such as STS-45 and "On a Mission" about the women astronauts, will be at the USSRC on this weekend. They will be attending the dinner and will be available for book signing. The writers will also be at the Biergarten on October 1 and events on October 3 at the USSRC.

It is our hope that you will attend this event and have the opportunity to see and visit with former colleagues, friends and their families. If you wish to sit at the MRA reserved tables, please contact Bennie Jacks at 256.603.0894 or benniejacks@att.net.

2027 MEMBERSHIP DUES

As of September 1, dues collected will be applied to 2027. Dues are \$50 and may be paid on line. Visit www.marshallretirees.org and select: Membership and Make a Payment. If you chose to pay by mail, send a check, made payable to MSFC Retirees Association to: MSFC Retirees Association, P. O. Box 4492, Huntsville, AL 35815, or by paying at the next luncheon on September 15 at Valley Hill Country Club.

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 changes, 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. Plans are also underway to update the MRA Membership Handbook, and we want to make sure your information is current.

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

If you prefer to receive the email only newsletter and not the hard copy mailed to your home, please let the Newsletter Editor know at 256.508.4203.

MRA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

As a reminder, the MRA is raising and contributing funds for the establishment of an endowed scholarship at Alabama A&M University. Thanks to those who have made contributions we have raised almost half of the needed \$25,000 goal.

Once fully funded, this scholarship will support a student every year, in perpetuity—creating a lasting legacy that extends far beyond any single semester or graduate. Your generosity helps bridge the gap between academic potential and professional success, empowering generation after generation to reach for the stars, propelled by those of us who charted the course before them.

You may donate by three methods:

1. **Scan the QR Code:** the code will take you directly to the NASA MSFC Retirees Association Endowment Fund form on Qgiv. Simply, select your giving amount and follow the prompts.



2. **Qgiv: give online by clicking the following link:** [NASAMSFCRetAssocEndowment](#)

The link will take you directly to the NASA MSFC Retirees Association Endowment Fund. Follow the prompts to continue processing your donation.

3. **By Check/Money Order:** Make payable to AAMU Foundation – *note NASA MSFC Retirees Association Endowment Fund* in the memo section. Mail to:

AAMU Foundation
Attn: Kim M. Davis
P. O. Box 1057
Normal, AL 35762

All donations are **100% tax deductible**. If you work for a corporation or private company, please check with your human resources department to inquire about the matching gift process, which could multiply to your gift.

MRA SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT: Hailey H. Neal

One of the pleasures of MRA's scholarship program is getting to know the students our scholarships help support. This quarter, we are pleased to introduce Hailey H. Neal, the recipient of the MRA scholarship at The University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Hailey is a sophomore studying Aerospace Engineering, and it probably won't surprise anyone that she already has her sights set on a career with NASA. She says working at NASA has been a dream of hers since she was very young, with a particular interest in satellites and space research. At UAH, Hailey says two of her favorite classes have been NASA in Latin America and her physics lab. She has especially enjoyed learning more about NASA's history, while the hands-on work in the physics lab has helped bring what she learns in the classroom to life. Watching the Artemis II launch only strengthened her determination to someday be part of NASA's work.

Hailey is keeping busy outside the classroom as well. She plays in the UAH pep band and helps manage the band's social media. She is also active in her sorority's philanthropic work supporting efforts to cure arthritis. Most importantly, Hailey understands what the scholarship means for her education and her future. "I am grateful for the scholarship as it has enabled me to continue my studies and continue to follow my dreams!" We are delighted to have Hailey as an MRA scholarship recipient and look forward to seeing where those dreams take her.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS TO MRA! **(Since the May Issue of This Newsletter)**

Debbie Bowerman

Janet Crawford

Joel Best

Darrell Deweese

Keith Dill

Mary Duncan

Belinda Grissam

Anita Howard

James Lane

Ashley Lee

Jennifer McCaghren

Melinda Naderi

Mahmoud Naderi

Dan Schumacher

Randy Silver

Tina Smith

Norberto Soto Fuentes

Ann Ullery

Karen VanSant

Marisa Wofford

Steve Wofford

Elaine Duncan

ORAL INTERVIEWS OF MSFC RETIREES COLLECTION AT UAH

By Jack Stokes

Have you ever missed a former co-worker from MSFC who was a really good friend and is no longer with us? This hit home to me recently when I lost two close colleagues. Because they had participated in the Oral Interviews Collection at UAH, established by the late Dr. Charles Lundquist, I was able to provide videos that told their life stories at their memorial services.

The late Dr. Lundquist had the foresight in 2006 to establish a relationship with the UAH's Archives & Special Collections Division to record the oral history of many of our Marshall members. We are continuing the collection today. To date we have 191 recordings that are available for you and the public to view at: <https://oralhistory.uah.edu/items/browse> or <https://oralhistory.uah.edu>.

Every employee at MSFC is important to the mission. Your story should be told. Please think about volunteering to be recorded so that your family, for generations to come, may have that opportunity to revisit with you through this media. It is quite easy to do. We meet at the UAH Library on a Friday afternoon and talk for about an hour, one-on-one, about who you are and what you have accomplished with your life. It is an "informal and relaxed" setting.

There are two separate, independent recorders available to you who can schedule and conduct your recording: Jack Stokes at TEL: 256-468-2743; or Kathryn Cataldo at TEL: 256-797-0995. Either one can oversee you leaving your legacy. UAH is excited to have us all recorded.

MRA WEBPAGE UPDATE (www.marshallretirees.org)

The MRA Web page has a new look. The previous image on the front page showed a picture of Building 4200, which no longer exists. Also, some large buttons (in the shape of cartoon rockets) were added to make some functions easier to see. However, these changes were made by Bruce Tiller, MRA Board Member, who, admittedly, is not a professional web designer.

Fortunately, we have met with a professional web designer who has built and manages the website for the US Space and Rocket Center (which is an easy-to-use site), and he has agreed to assess what it would take to bring our site up to that level of operation.

Our plan is to, over the next few months, correct some of the bugs in the system, while improving the ease of use of the site and compatibility with phone access. Check it out and let us know what you think! Contact Bruce Tiller at: tillebk@gmail.com or 256.653.6881.

PHOTO GALLERY FROM JUNE LUNCHEON



Jim Turner, Speaker Chad Summer, and Mark King



Warren Adams, Rein Ise, and Harry Craft



Renee Cox, Mahmoud Naderi, Tia Ferguson, Lybrease Woodard



Richard Hoover and Jean Payne



OBITUARIES

Bacchus, David Lee, 87, of Huntsville, died June 10, 2026.
Clough, Daniel Ronald, Sr., 89, of Huntsville, died July 6, 2026.
Davis, Billy Keith, 97, of Cocoa Beach, FL, died August 10, 2026.
Edge, Teddy “Ted” Mack, 82, of Ardmore, TN, died July 27, 2026.
Faile, Gwyn Christopher, 85, of Huntsville, died June 29, 2026.
Hale, Joseph Peter, II, 70, of Waleska, GA, died August 5, 2026.
Hampton, Tammy Louisa, 53, of Huntsville, died June 13, 2026.
Kozub, George Michael, 84, of Huntsville, died August 25, 2026.
Laue, Jay Henry, 92, of Madison, died August 24, 2026.
McBrayer, Robert O., 86, of Huntsville, died August 10, 2026.
Morea, Saverio “Sonny” Francis, 94, of Huntsville, died July 6, 2026.
Murray, Bettie Jane Allgood, 93, of Huntsville, died August 20, 2026.
Patterson, James “Pat” Wilburn, Jr., 94 of Guntersville, died July 6, 2026.
Robinson, Glenn Albert Jr., 84, of Houston, TX, died August 21, 2026.
Russell, James Wayne, 90, of Huntsville, died June 9, 2026.
Taylor, Annie Ellen Leder, 84, of Huntsville, died May 15, 2026.
Whitt, Sarah Evelyn Willingham Whitt, 91 of Ardmore, AL died May 18, 2026.
Woods, Warren Keith, 62, of Toney, died May 6, 2026.
Zagrodsky, Robert Graham, 89, of Huntsville, died May 12, 2026.

NOTE: The obituaries listed here are collected from local funeral homes and information received from friends/colleagues. If you know of the passing of a Marshall retiree that lived outside of the local area, please notify the Newsletter Editor, Jean Lee, Bjeanlee@aol.com, or text 256.508.4203 for inclusion here.

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

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

OFFICERS:

President: Melissa McGrath, mccgrath1915@gmail.com
Vice-President: Jim Turner, n2250x@gmail.com
Secretary: Charlie Finnegan, cjfinnegan59@gmail.com
Treasurer: Mark King, MisterMarcus62@gmail.com

BOARD MEMBERS:

Charles Scales, chscales@aol.com	Jean Payne, clovis.payne@yahoo.com
Lybrease Woodard, lrfwoodard@gmail.com	Amy Epps, amyepps@comcast.net
Jack Stokes, jackstokes1962@gmail.com	Annette Tingle, tinga102022@outlook.com
Bobby Watkins, bobby.watkins@barrios.com	

PAST PRESIDENTS/STANDING BOARD MEMBERS:

Linda Posey, lbposey@comcast.net
Gerald Smith, gerald.smith6@comcast.net
Parker Counts, parker@countsconsultants.com
Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu
Steve Cash, scash4@bellsouth.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Membership: Mary Spaulding, md_spaulding@comcast.net
Newsletter: Jean Lee, Bjeanlee@aol.com
Wall of Honor: Rick Chappell, rick.chappell@vanderbilt.edu
Memorial History: Gray Settle, gsettle@gmail.com
Scholarship Committee: Jim Turner, n2250x@gmail.com
Community Outreach Coordinator: Bennie Jacks, benniejacks@att.net
Strategic Communications: Bruce Tiller, tillebk@gmail.com
New Member Recruitment: TBD