

Remarks As Delivered  
By the Honorable Shana Dale  
NASA Deputy Administrator  
Nobel Lecture by Dr. Mather at the National Air and Space Museum  
October 3, 2007

Dr. Weiler, thank you for that introduction (*Ed Weiler, Director, Goddard Space Flight Center*)

Thank all of you for coming this evening.

At this museum, we're surrounded by the mementos of an era that began fifty years ago. Fifty years seems like a long time, and in some ways it is. But it is dwarfed by the time – and the distance it represents – that John Mather and George Smoot examined when they made the discovery that won them the Nobel Prize.

They and their team gazed back to the first moments of the universe, mapping the hot and cold spots that still remain from the early moments of the Big Bang. Drs. Mather and Smoot opened new perspectives, new potentials, and now new opportunities.

However, Dr. Mather is not resting on his laurels. He is continuing his work as the Senior Project Scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). The JWST will find the first galaxies that formed in the early Universe, connecting the Big Bang to our own Milky Way Galaxy.

Dr. Mather is also the Chief Scientist of the Science Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters, providing guidance and overseeing planning. How privileged we are at NASA, to have a man of such brilliance and humility.

Dr. Mather is the first NASA employee to earn a Nobel Prize for work performed at a NASA research center. But we know he won't be the last. Like any organization, NASA is only as good as its people. And what incredible people we have.

In the short time I have tonight, I cannot even begin to detail the work of our NAA professionals – employers and contractors – have accomplished in the past 50 years, and the amazing plans we have for the future.

But I will note a few ways over the next year that we plan to celebrate their accomplishments and their plans. Tonight is the first official event of what will be a year-long commemoration of NASA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

There's a lot to celebrate. So all year long we're going to be honoring moments of discovery, small steps and giant leaps. We'll be celebrating the real benefits that reaching out into the new frontier has brought back to earth – benefits in inspiration and discovery; ins security and prosperity; and in saving lives and protecting the environment.

But we'll also be looking forward – to the new horizons beckoning and the worlds of promise opening.

Last month, we unveiled our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo and Administrator Griffin opened NASA's lecture series. Over the next year, we'll see prominent speakers touch on the contributions that NASA has provided in areas such as economic competitiveness, technology innovation, healthcare and managing our environment.

Later this month, the NASA History Division and the National Air and Space Museum History division will team up for a conference on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Space Age. Mike and I will be traveling around the country talking about NASA's accomplishments, future endeavors, and how what NASA does in exploring "out there" benefits our lives and communities here on Earth by:

- Inspiring new generations of students to pursue careers in high tech fields;
- Innovating and creating new technologies and new markets that drive economic growth and competitiveness;
- Discovering new worlds and understanding more about the history of our universe and our solar system;
- Contributing to greater understanding of our own world, which enables us to better manage and protect it;
- And finally, fulfilling the innate human need to reach outside ourselves: To see beyond the immense challenges and realize accomplishments never before seen.

This is the stuff of exploration, and this is why we are so determined in our quest.

We've been in space for only fifty years. But what we've seen and done – the moments of inspiration and discovery – have forever altered our perspective as humans.

The future that NASA's skilled and dedicated workforce is planning is full of possibilities – in human exploration, in science and in aeronautics.

We're on the edge of a new era of exploration. It's closer than you think. A day, a decade and suddenly, today's hopes will become tomorrow's realities.

Now it is my pleasure to recognize Congressman Lampson, a great friend of science and of NASA; and to give a brief introduction to Chairman of the House Science and Technology Committee, the Honorable Bart Gordon.

Chairman Gordon is a great supporter of science, technology, engineering and math education. He understands that scientific advancement is key to U.S. competitiveness. Chairman Gordon leads NASA's oversight committee, and NASA understands and appreciates the dedicated interest of Chairman Gordon and the Committee in our Nation's civil space agency.

Whether it is sending a letter to the President, urging support for the Nation's space and aeronautics programs, asking NASA's appropriations subcommittee leadership for

adequate funding for the Agency, or listening to the concerns of the science community; we are fortunate to have Chairman Gordon in the role he serves.

Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your taking the time to join us this evening, and look forward to continuing to work with you in support of our Nation's space program.

Please join me in welcoming Chairman Gordon.