Glenn Research Center Honor Awards

Remarks by
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National Aeronautics and Space Administration

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DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR GARVER: Thanks, Ray. Very interesting that any Center Director would think that I would have anything to do with their performance appraisal. You all know, I'm sure, how that would go, and we in Washington work for you, the Center Directors, so we appreciate everything you do here.

I just flew in this morning and have five minutes over in Ray's office and teed up the video to show me, so about 30 seconds into it, I'm rather directive. You get used to it in this position. "Bring me three blank sheets of paper and a thick marker," so they did that. So I start with my three words: NASA Glenn Rocks.

[Applause.]

You read my bio, but you left out the parts that really tie me to Glenn. This is, in so many ways, my home center. I am from Michigan, as you can maybe already tell from this lovely Midwestern twang that I have, I have not lost over my 30 years since being here, and as you mentioned, my first job out of college was working for none other than John H. Glenn.

The other thing that was very, very important
about that time was I met my husband working for John Glenn. We will celebrate our 25th anniversary next week. We have two wonderful sons, all because of John Glenn and the fabulous State of Ohio.

[Applause.]

I got married in Ohio 25 years ago, just up the road at Manakiki Country Club in Willoughby, Ohio. My mother-in-law lives in Cleveland still, my sister-in-law, lots of wonderful family, so I do consider you my home center. And those of you who are concerned because I'm from Michigan, please note that I am from Central Michigan, a Spartan, not a Wolverine, so my husband and I bond over cheering against University of Michigan, since he went to Ohio State and graduated from Kent State.

So it is certainly, certainly my pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me. It is, in fact, the NASA workforce that is responsible for all of the agency's successes, and you're the foundation of the direction on which we are now embarked here at Glenn.

You are with us in every aspect of our work, from human spaceflight and aeronautics to science and technology, and I'm pleased to recognize so many of you
today. Your hard-working personnel is what we use for
everything I do in Washington. It's to tell people what it
is that you are doing right here at the NASA Glenn Center.

So Glenn is going to continue to be at the
forefront of NASA's future managing things, for instance,
like our recent call for proposals in solar electric
propulsion, pioneering other new vital propulsion systems
and technology development efforts, continuing to push the
envelope of aeronautics technology as we bring online the
next generation of air transportation systems, continuing
to learn from experiments and instruments that you
developed and sent to the International Space Station, the
centerpiece of our human spaceflight activities until at
least 2020, continuing to reach out to students and the
public with the many wonderful projects that Glenn has
worked on throughout NASA's history. So our collective
future is bright, and Glenn's diverse expertise will play a
key role in this path forward.

So today we honor the men and women who have made
a very real difference in this past year, and as always,
NASA has done great things. We've achieved historic
milestones and made new discoveries about our own planet
and the universe around us. Each of you have contributed to those many successes, and the men and women we honor today have made special lasting conversations to Glenn and to NASA's missions.

So, as an agency this past year, we have continued to safely fly out the Space Shuttle manifest, and each mission has been powered by the research and your work here in the early days on the Shuttle main engines and testing of many Shuttle components. Of course, 20 Ohioans have flown on the Shuttle, including the legendary John Glenn himself. With the retirement of the Space Shuttle fleet, we celebrate all of your contributions.

The Shuttle's legacy will endure for generations, not only for the amazing technological accomplishments itself, all of the satellites and spacecraft it has launched, but for the last over 40 missions, the launching of the International Space Station.

So this year alone, crews aboard ISS have continued on the orbiting outpost to conduct research activities, some developed right here, and increased the unique potential for breakthroughs that will help us send humans even farther into the solar system.
This past year, we celebrated 10 full years of continuous human occupation of the Space Station truly making us not only a space-faring nation but a space-faring civilization.

This year, NASA used some of its expertise that we've developed right here on Earth as well. We helped the Chilean miners survive their predicament, helped provide information about the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico to help contain it. We launched a satellite just recently to study the oceans and how that affects our climate and weather systems.

We learned more about the planets outside our solar system and just in the next two days are closing in, thanks to the ion engine that you helped develop here, on the asteroid Vesta.

We've facilitated the visualization of future aircraft with the help of Glenn employees and sent an instrument to the Space Station, the AMS, that will help us understand the very structure of the universe.

We put a spacecraft in orbit around Mercury for the first time, and yes, we've said goodbye to the beloved Spirit rover on Mars, but you know what they say, "We'll be
back," just later this year launching again with the Mars Science Lab.

We launched a website to tell stories of women and girls and young women employed at Glenn and at NASA, so that young women and girls now in school can consider following their own path into science, technology, engineering, and math. Three of your colleagues at Glenn are featured in this NASA White House website.

We've also connected students around the country with Station astronauts through educational downlinks, invited people across the entire globe to participate in NASA exploration through many of your conferences, exhibits, Tweetups. We did survive a few failures, and we've celebrated all these successes as a family.

The people we honor today conceived and planned and managed a full range of activities that have made all these things I just mentioned possible.

When your vision, as is NASA's, is to reach for new heights and reveal the unknown, so that what we do and learn will benefit all humanity, that is what we're honoring today. Each of you have brought vast and unique skill set to this vision, and you're working every day to
explore the universe while making life better here on Earth.

In my view, NASA is absolutely essential to our nation's very well-being. Its technology, scientific developments benefit each and every one of us every day of our lives. Its jobs are vital to our economy, and perhaps most importantly, we inspire our nation and the world to consider their highest potential of which we are all capable. The next generation is looking to all of you to jump-start that future.

And I can't come from Washington and not make sure that you recognize the message that I bring is that your nation's leadership believes in you, counts on you, and appreciates you. I know that sometimes the headlines are not what we would want. If any of you watched the hearing the other day with our Administrator, Charlie Bolden, it seems at times that people are debating whether or not we should continue this investment.

I would encourage you to really think about what the discussion is, because 20 years ago, the discussion was whether or not we were going to have a future for NASA, for human spaceflight, for the investment in this amazing
endeavor that you carry out on behalf of this nation. That is not the debate that's going on. I believe we have turned the corner, and the debate is not about whether or not we explore, whether or not there is a NASA, but how to best do it, how to best continue to be that space-faring nation, how to best invest in technology that will return for economic growth.

The President has set out a path that you are vital to. We recognize as we work with Congress that we are going to get to the valued work that all of you, will contribute to a bright, bright future. You need to be just assured that every time when I go to the Hill, I go to the White House, there is nothing, nothing but pride for your work.

So I want to thank each of you today, your honorees for your commitment to excellence and for helping NASA carry on this proud legacy. I've been told there are 70 people being recognized for individual accomplishment and 547 people total honored for their excellent work. Seven of you have more than 40 years experience, service to the government. So, as Ray mentioned, I'm just coming up on my 2-year anniversary this tour, so 40 years certainly
does seem impressive.

   Few agencies have the high profile that we command at NASA, and you work under the microscope every day. We ask you to do more, and we are so, so proud of you. As you come to work each and every day, please know that no matter where I go in this country, the dedication of the NASA workforce is appreciated. Without your continued service, we would not be able to achieve the amazing accomplishments of the past or be able to lay out those for the future.

   We're embarking on a future that includes new capabilities and new missions with evermore challenging destinations. The NASA workforce, I know will rise to the challenge, rise to the occasion, and each year, we will have even more diverse successes to celebrate.

   So all of you who are singled out today to be honored, I want to thank those of you who are just here to see your colleagues be honored. I know that what you are going to remember is those things that you have done that have left the world better than you found it.

   I was raised in Michigan. My family was from a farming community in Michigan, although many of them were
in public service. My grandfather, my uncle were State legislature, State senators, part time as a way to give back. You are civil servants, those of you who directly work for NASA, taking an oath to serve the Constitution. I know you've given up a lot. You've given up time with friends and family, given up other professional career opportunities. But I want you to know that it is not only appreciated, but that you can feel better about having left behind a world that is better than you found it. There is really no greater calling.

I recently was the commencement speaker at George Washington University's graduation ceremony, and the theme for those students is, of course, trying to get them to come to work at NASA and have a STEM career and be able to include them in the NASA family, industry, academia, or government but also to choose something that you do that you can feel very proud of.

So I truly believe that the Glenn Research Center is central to our future. We honor you for not only your past year but your past decades of service.

I don't know if there's any press here. My only request is that you not note my presence, because I didn't
have time this visit to see my mother-in-law. Other than
that, there is absolutely every indication that Northern
Ohio and the Glenn Research Center has a great future
because of what you have done for us.

   Thank you so much for what you have done, and
   congratulations.

   [Applause.]

   Oh, I'm going to leave you with just a different
   combination of my three words: Glenn rocks NASA.

   [Applause.]

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