



Caption: NASA Marshall center director, Dr. Wernher von Braun and Alabama A&M University president, Dr. Richard D. Morrison signing a cooperative agreement between the two institutions in November 1968. Credit: NASA

NASA in the 'Long' Civil Rights Movement Conference

Thursday March 16 – Friday March 17, 2017
United States Space and Rocket Center,
Educational Training Facility
1 Tranquility Base - Huntsville, Alabama 35805

On March 16-17, 2017, the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center History Office and the University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH) History Department will host a conference at the United States Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama to address the role/relationship of NASA to the 'Long' Civil Rights Movement. No registration is required.

Organizers

Brian C. Odom, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center Historian

Dr. Stephen Waring, University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH) - History Chair

Travel Information

Hotels

There are several hotel options available near the event including:

Huntsville Marriott, 5 Tranquility Base
Hilton Garden Inn, 4801 Governors House Drive
The Westin Hotel, 6800 Governors Drive West
Hampton Inn and Suites, 7010 Cabela Drive

Transportation

A number of hotels offer shuttle service to and from the airport. Rental cars are also available at the Huntsville International Airport (HSV).

Conference Program

Thursday, March 16, 2017

8:00 - 8:30 Sign-In

8:30 – 9:00 Opening Remarks

9:00 – 10:30 First round of papers

Moderator: Dr. Michael J. Neufeld (National Air and Space Museum)

Dr. P.J. Blount (University of Mississippi School of Law) and David Molina (Northwestern University)

“The Distance from the Ghetto to the Moon: Contextualizing the Space Program in the Discourse of the American Civil Rights Movement”

Dr. Roger Launius (Launius Historical Services)

“NASA, the Great Society, and the American South”

Dr. Brenda Plummer (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

“The Man on the Moon: Race and Space”

10:30 – 10:45 Break

10:45 – 12:15 Second Round of Papers

Moderator: Dr. Carolyn M. Barske (University of North Alabama)

Tim Pennycuff (University of Alabama Birmingham)

“It was mostly money that integrated it”: Federal Funding and the Desegregation of Healthcare in Birmingham, Alabama

Marsha Freeman (Independent Scholar)

“NASA and Civil Rights: The TVA as Historic Precedent”

Dr. Courtney L. Thompson (Sewanee: University of the South)

Unhidden: African American Women at NASA

12:15 – 1:15 Lunch

1:15 – 2:45 Third Round of Papers

Moderator: Dr. Margaret Weitekamp (National Air and Space Museum)

Dr. Bettyann Holtzmann Kevles (Yale University)

First Black Women Astronauts at NASA

Adrienne Provenzano (Independent Scholar)

The First Six American Women Astronauts: Civil Rights Agents of Change for Gender Equity at NASA

Christina Roberts (University of Nevada, Reno)

“Petite Engineer’s Sex Not Considered a Handicap”

2:45 – 3:00 Break

3:00 – 4:30 Fourth Round of Papers

Moderator: Dr. Michael V. Paulauskas (Middle Tennessee State University)

Dr. Keith Snedegar (Utah Valley University)

“The Congressional Black Caucus and the closure of NASA’s satellite tracking station at Hartesbeesthoek, South Africa”

Dr. Bill Barry (NASA Chief Historian)

“Civil Rights and the Space Program: The View from Moscow”

Dr. Cathleen Lewis (National Air and Space Museum)

"Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez and Guion Bluford: The Last Cold War Race Battle"

4:30 – Closing Discussion

Friday, March 17, 2017

8:30 – 10:00 Opening and first round of papers

Moderator: Dr. Andrew J. Dunar (University of Alabama Huntsville)

Dr. Cyrus Mody (Maastricht University)

“A Competence Which Should Be Used:” NASA and Urban Systems in the 1970s

Dr. David H. Onkst (Independent Scholar)

“One Giant Leap or Just Some Small Steps?: Grumman Aerospace Workers, Apollo, and The ‘Long’ Civil Rights Movement”

Dr. Eric Fenrich (University of California Santa Barbara)

“The Gates of Opportunity: NASA, Black Activism, and Educational Access”

10:00 – 10:15 Break

10:15– 11:45 Second round of papers

Moderator: Veronica D. Henderson, MLS (Alabama A&M University)

Lorenzo Bright (Florida State University)

“From Bluford to Bolden: The African American Impact on NASA”

Stephanie Ruel (Athabasca University)

“Intersectionality and History at Work: The Case of Ruth Bates Harris and NASA”

Dr. Matthew L. Downs (University of Mobile)

“Accommodating the Forces of Change”: Civil Rights and Economic Development in Space Age Huntsville, Alabama

11:45 – 1:00 Lunch

1:00 – 3:00 Third Round of Papers

Moderator: Shane Bell (National Archives and Records Administration, Atlanta)

Reagan Grimsley (University of Alabama Huntsville)

“What steps can institutions take to create a more comprehensive and inclusive archival record?”

Dr. Jonathan Coopersmith (Texas A&M University)

“And where do we go from here? Ensuring the past and future history of space”

Dr. Monique Laney (Auburn University)

"NASA and the South: New Directions in NASA history"

Justin Rudder (Alabama Department of Archives and History)

“Defining an African Heritage in Alabama”

3:00- Final Discussion and Closing

For more information contact Brian Odom at brian.c.odom@nasa.gov