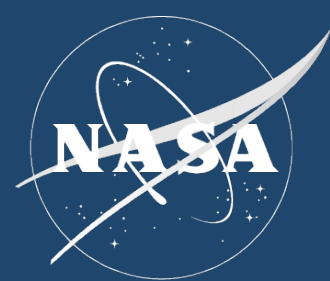


STENNIS SPACE CENTER

Profiles in Leadership



Growing up, Terrance Jones dreamt of being a car designer or automotive engineer. In his teens, Jones' interest shifted to medicine. Ultimately, Jones' path led to public service. Prior to joining NASA, Jones spent 20 years providing equal opportunity and human resources services in diverse settings.

Beginning his federal career with the U.S. Air Force in 1997 as a civil engineering heavy equipment operator, Jones later served in the Military Equal Opportunity Office at Kunsan Air Base in South Korea and at Hurlburt Field in Florida. Joining the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2009, he developed expertise in labor relations and employee relations. As the Chief of the Labor & Employee Relations at the Veterans Health Care System in Biloxi, Mississippi, Jones provided services to more than 2,400 employees, including four outpatient clinics across three states.

Concurrently, he served in the Air Force Reserves as the senior equal opportunity advisor at Keesler Air Force Base. In 2018, Jones began service as the labor relations officer at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. In December 2018, Jones transitioned to Stennis and began his current role as the supervisory human resources business partner for the site's Human Resources Services Branch. In this position, he provides authoritative management advisory services to the center director and Stennis' other senior executives.

How would you describe the Stennis workforce and culture?

From a leadership standpoint, Stennis' senior executive team is very diverse. The culture at Stennis is much like a family.

What will you most fondly remember from your career?

I would say Artemis is the most memorable part of my career. I will think

think back on the fact that I saw where the Space Launch System core stage was tested for the first time at Stennis, I went where it was fabricated at Michoud Assembly Facility, and that I got the chance to be on the launchpad from which SLS will lift off. To know people who actually worked on these things and contributed to the program – that is what I will look back on from my NASA career and say, "Wow."

What has been your biggest career challenge so far?

The biggest career challenge so far is etching my place into the Stennis family culture dynamic, or breaking in to the culture. I navigated this by reaching out to people and building trust by doing what I said I would do, then doing a follow-up to ensure that what I did was exactly what was needed of me. Once you are tried and tested, and you have delivered, that helps establish the trust necessary to fit in to the culture.

What are some important lessons you have learned?

- Relationships are important.
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- You may have stumbles, but it is important to pick yourself up.
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- See the glass as half-full versus half-empty.
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- You can take a negative outlook and try to put a positive spin on it.
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- Good things take time.

What would you say to students considering STEM career pathways?

With the technology that everybody has, students of today are already light years ahead of other people who have been in STEM careers prior to them. With smart phones and tablets in every classroom, students have virtually limitless information at their fingertips, which was unheard of in my time growing up. They



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also know how to fluently work these technologies, which has them fully absorbed into the STEM environment. With their thought process now, they can easily transition into a NASA career field or some other STEM-intensive career field. They are already doing it.

How do you define what a leader is?

A leader is a trusted, honest advisor and guide in whatever situation arises. The two qualities of honesty and trust are essential to great leadership. I can accept information that is bad and believe information that is good if I trust what a leader is saying.

What advice do you have for an aspiring leader?

One, build the trust of the people with whom you work. People are willing to follow you if they know that your intentions are true – that you are being honest in what you are trying to do. Two, be confident in the job that you are doing. Three, study your craft. Know what you do well, and you will discover the qualities needed to be in that leadership role.