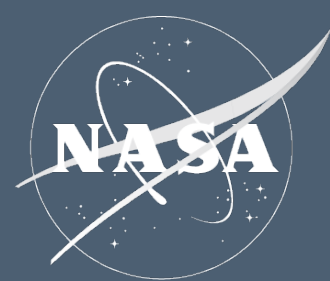


# STENNIS SPACE CENTER

## Profiles in Leadership



As a young boy, Troy Frisbie wanted to be an astronaut, like a lot of kids. The Apollo Program was an early, but profound, influence on his life. Later in his teens, Frisbie remained equally fascinated by the Space Shuttle Program. Working for NASA was Frisbie's enduring goal, and the agency's Voyager missions, as well as the Star Trek television show, deepened his passion for space exploration. Ultimately, Frisbie served for 10 years a civilian employee of the U.S. Air Force before serving the past 20 years as a NASA employee. Before his current role as Legislative Affairs Specialist at Stennis, Frisbie served in several positions. He was the first Construction of Facilities program manager for the center, and during his 10 years in this role, Frisbie oversaw a \$200 million site recovery program following Hurricane Katrina.

**As a young person, did you envision working for NASA?**

I always wanted to work for NASA. I had three major influences in my young life: the Apollo Program, the Voyager missions, and Star Trek. I always dreamed of going into space or being part of it in some way. In fact, my office at work has models of a Saturn V rocket, the Voyager probes, and multiple iterations of the USS Enterprise – all of which are “tributes” to my inspirations. The Apollo Program put humans on the Moon, and the engineering challenges with that effort gave me my earliest interests in space. When the Voyager probes started sending back pictures of Saturn and Jupiter, that further captured my interests and “made it real.” Star Trek showed what I felt was next progression for humankind – to explore the rest of the galaxy firsthand.

**What upcoming NASA milestones are you excited about?**

I am excited to see the launch of the

Artemis I mission – especially after seeing the Space Launch System core stage tested at Stennis. I am also looking forward to seeing what the James Webb Space Telescope will show us about our universe.

**What are some of the most important lessons you learned?**

There are so many. However, one really stands out. One lesson that actually started with my mother, but was further reinforced at NASA, is to ask questions. My mother always said, “I am never afraid to ask questions.” At NASA, there are so many moving parts and complex things happening all at once. It is nearly impossible to know everything – even about a single unit or item. Odds are, if you have a question – others have the same question too. Do not be afraid to ask.

**What mentors were instrumental in your career growth?**

The number one influence in all things work-related was my father. He was the hardest-working person I knew and instilled in me the values of hard work and ethics. He set the example. Throughout my government career, I have been blessed to have many great bosses and mentors. While working with the Air Force, I had two bosses/mentors who really stood out and taught me some valuable lessons in leadership. The first is Mr. Jimmy Hall, who was a section chief in the 81st Training Support Squadron at Keesler Air Force Base when I worked on aircraft maintenance simulators (“SimWare”) for the Airborne Warning and Control System and Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System aircraft. He was a great mentor and a leader who perfected the “art” of delegation – he put people in the right positions and trusted them to do their jobs. He would tell anyone, “If I do my job [as section chief] right, then this shop should function perfectly when I go on vacation or on travel.” He always had full faith in his team, kept no secrets, and



**Troy Frisbie**  
**Legislative Affairs**  
**Specialist**

trusted us to do our work. Lt. Col. Denise Ridgway – also at Keesler AFB – put me, as a young 31-year-old, in charge of a flight of 60 people, military personnel ranging in rank from senior airman to master sergeant, and civilians from a range of pay grades. She had faith in me. The leadership lesson learned from her was to be direct, be honest, and do not “sugar coat” things when it comes to your people. These experiences really helped me take the next step to NASA.

**How do you define leadership, and what are the top qualities?**

Trustworthiness and honesty are at the top of the list. One must have faith in leadership, and that faith starts with these qualities. Other qualities include the ability to seek out good counsel and different opinions with an open mind and, then, be decisive. A good leader listens and never acts as if his/her opinion is the only opinion. Finally, a good leader holds the team accountable – both in recognition of good work and also in areas where the team may need to improve when dealing with failure.