

NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe Resigns

December 18 2004

Administrator Sean O'Keefe, who over the past three years led the National Aeronautics and Space Administration through an aggressive and comprehensive management transformation and helped the agency through one of its most painful tragedies, resigned on Monday.

In his resignation letter to the President the Administrator wrote, "I will continue until you have named a successor and in the hope the Senate will act on your nomination by February."

"I've been honored to serve this President, the American people and my talented colleagues here at NASA," said Administrator O'Keefe.

"Together, we've enjoyed unprecedented success and seen each other through arduous circumstances. This was the most difficult decision I've ever made, but it's one I felt was best for my family and our future."

O'Keefe, 48, is NASA's tenth administrator. Nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the U.S. Senate, he was sworn into office Dec. 21, 2001. It was the Administrator's fourth Presidential appointment.

After joining NASA, Administrator O'Keefe focused his efforts on successfully bringing financial credibility to the agency and eliminating a \$5 billion budget shortfall for the International Space Station program. He introduced a number of innovative management and budget reforms. He led all federal agencies in the implementation of the President's Management Agenda, which is designed to make government more responsive and efficient. In three of the original five categories on the

Agenda, NASA's performance is at the highest standard.

The tragic loss of seven astronauts aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia as it re-entered the Earth's atmosphere during STS-107 on Feb. 1, 2003, focused the nation's attention on the future of America's space program.

Administrator O'Keefe directed significant changes in the Space Shuttle's safety and management programs. He was a key architect of the President's new Vision for Space Exploration, announced in January during a historic speech at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

The new Vision for Space Exploration led a transformation of NASA and has positioned the agency to meet the challenges of safely returning the Space Shuttle to flight, completing the International Space Station, exploring the complexities of our home planet, and going back to the moon, on to Mars and beyond.

"The President and Congress have demonstrated their faith in us. We need to seize this opportunity," added Administrator O'Keefe. "NASA has a new direction that will push the boundaries of technology, science, space flight and knowledge, and will inspire new generations of explorers for years to come and secure this great nation's future."

Encouraging students to study mathematics, science and technology has been a priority for the Administrator. In April 2002, he unveiled a new Educator Astronaut Program, in which a select few of the most outstanding teachers would be chosen to join NASA's Astronaut Corps. The new Educator Astronaut candidates were introduced in May on Space Day and are in training at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

During his tenure, Administrator O'Keefe realized a number of significant mission triumphs, including Cassini's exploration of Saturn

and its moons, the recent successful hypersonic test flights of the X-43A and the historic landing of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers Spirit and Opportunity on the Red Planet in January.

"NASA is the only agency in the world where its people are allowed to dream big and then work to make those dreams come true. Who wouldn't treasure the opportunity to be a part of pioneering history?" added the Administrator. "I'm humbled by the dedication and determination of the NASA Family and their commitment to the future of exploration. I wish each of them the very best. I am confident in their ability to carry out what we've started," Administrator O'Keefe concluded.

Administrator O'Keefe first joined the Bush Administration as the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, overseeing the preparation, management and administration of the Federal budget and government wide-management initiatives.

"The extraordinary opportunities you have permitted me to assume these last four years have been experiences of a lifetime," the Administrator wrote in his resignation letter. "In the most challenging moments during my service I have drawn considerable strength, resolve and determination to do what's right by the standards you set every day."

From 1989 to 1992, Administrator O'Keefe served as Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Defense. President George H. Bush appointed him as the Secretary of the Navy in July 1992.

Before joining then Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's Pentagon management team, he served on the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations staff for eight years, and was Staff Director of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

His public service began in 1978 when he was selected as a Presidential Management Intern.

Administrator O'Keefe is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration; a member of the Committee on Climate Change Science and Technology; and a Fellow of the International Academy of Astronautics.

During his academic postings, he was a Visiting Scholar at the Wolfson College of the University of Cambridge, England; a member of the Naval Postgraduate School's civil-military relations seminar team; and conducted seminars for the Strategic Studies Group at Oxford University.

Administrator O'Keefe served on the national security panel to devise the 1988 Republican platform and was a member of the 1985 Kennedy School of Government program for national security executives at Harvard University.

In 1993, President Bush and Secretary Cheney presented him the Distinguished Public Service Award. He was the 1999 faculty recipient of the Syracuse University Chancellor's Award for Public Service; recipient of the Department of the Navy's Public Service Award in December 2000; and has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees from several prestigious educational institutions. In March 2003 and 2004, he was recognized and honored by the Irish American Magazine as one of the Top 100 Irish Americans.

He is the author of several journal articles and contributing author of "Keeping the Edge: Managing Defense for the Future," released in October 2000. In 1998 he co-authored "The Defense Industry in the Post-Cold War Era: Corporate Strategies and Public Policy Perspectives."

Administrator O'Keefe earned his Bachelor of Arts in 1977 from Loyola University in New Orleans and his Master of Public Administration degree in 1978 from The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University, N.Y.

Citation: NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe Resigns (2004, December 18) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2004-12-nasa-administrator-sean-okeefe-resigns.html>

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