

NASA Selects New Space Shuttle Program Manager

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NASA announced Tuesday the selection of N. Wayne Hale Jr. as manager of the Space Shuttle Program. He has been deputy manager since July 2003 and succeeds Bill Parsons, who returned to NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi as its director.

Hale began his career with NASA in 1978 in the Propulsion Systems Section of Flight Operations at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston. For the next 10 years, he progressed into management, becoming a lead propulsion systems officer in Mission Control. He later headed the Propulsion Systems Section from 1985 to 1988.

That experience led Hale into the Flight Director Office of the Mission Operations Directorate in 1988. During that tenure, he oversaw flight control teams in Mission Control during all aspects of 40 space shuttle missions, 28 overseeing the critical ascent and entry phases. His last two years as a flight director were spent as deputy chief flight director for shuttle operations.

"Wayne's qualifications and his ability to perform this job speak for themselves," said Bill Gerstenmaier, associate administrator for Space Operations. "He has earned a tremendous level of respect from those inside and outside the agency because of his experience and personality. His resume and diverse background are well suited for this role," he noted.

In early 2003, Hale was tapped to serve as launch integration manager at

NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Following the Space Shuttle Columbia accident, Hale joined the Space Shuttle Program Office as deputy manager and also was selected to chair the program's Mission Management Team (MMT).

In that capacity, Hale was instrumental in restructuring the MMT, focusing on ensuring the membership is completely cross-trained in all aspects of missions, while also ensuring all levels of expertise have input into problem solving.

"When I picked Wayne to be deputy, it was because of his knowledge and experience of the shuttle, as well as the credibility he has earned around the agency," Parsons said. "He has dedicated his professional career to NASA and the space program and is the perfect choice to lead the Space Shuttle Program," he added.

The awards and honors Hale has received throughout his 27-year career with NASA include the agency's Space Flight Awareness Leadership Award, Outstanding Leadership Medal, Exceptional Service Medal and numerous Group Achievement Awards.

Hale graduated with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Rice University in 1976 and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Purdue University in 1978.

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