

NASA names first black flight director

November 8 2005

NASA has named Kwatsi Alibaruho the first African-American to lead its Mission Control Center in Houston as a flight director.

Since the beginning of the U.S. space program, only 58 people have directed human spaceflight missions. The flight director class of 2005 is the second largest ever appointed and the most diverse. The nine-member group also includes three women and two Hispanics.

Leading a team of flight controllers, support personnel and engineering experts, a flight director has the overall responsibility to manage and carry out space shuttle flights and International Space Station expeditions. A flight director also leads and orchestrates planning and integration activities with flight controllers, payload customers, space station partners and others.

"I'm humbled and honored to serve in the capacity of flight director," said Alibaruho. "I caught the 'science bug' very early from watching science fiction programs, and I wanted to learn about real science."

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Citation: NASA names first black flight director (2005, November 8) retrieved 16 August 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-11-nasa-black-flight-director.html>

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