

# Lowell Randall, rocket scientist, dies at 96 in NM

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(AP) -- Lowell Randall, a pioneer rocket scientist who helped launched the U.S. space program and tested intercontinental ballistic missiles, has died. He was 96.

He died Tuesday of natural causes at the Good Samaritan Las Cruces Village, a nursing home, according to a funeral home in Las Cruces.

Randall was part of a team lead by rocket pioneer Robert Goddard, who developed liquid Jet Assist Take Off rocket engines, a key element for moon spaceflights. He became an engineer without ever attending college, getting the job with Goddard after installing carpet in his home.

He later became Goddard team's chief test engineer at the Naval Research Station at Annapolis, said Joe Gold, author of "Lowell Randall: Rocket Pioneer."

He returned to New Mexico in the 1950s to work for White Sands Proving Grounds, which later became White Sands Missile Range, to test the Redstone rocket engines used to send the first American astronauts into space.

Randall then led a team at Martin Marietta Corporation in Colorado, where his team worked on the Titan I Missile, a multi-stage intercontinental ballistic missile and one that also could serve for space flight.

He retired in 1978 but worked part-time as an engineer until the mid-1990s and served as a consultant, Gold said. Although he often was invited to speak at universities around New Mexico, his formal education did not extend beyond graduating from high school in Roswell, his hometown.

Gold said what keep Randall going during the rapidly changing scientific world was an enthusiasm to learn.

"He was a plain-spoken person," said Gold. "He could understand anything...as long as it was technical."

Randall is survived by two daughters and a step-daughter. He is preceded in death by a daughter, his first wife, Helen Randall, and his second wife, Anna Randall.

Funeral services were scheduled Saturday at Hillcrest Memorial Gardens Cemetery in Las Cruces.

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