One SMALL STEP

A tribute to Purdue graduates in the U.S. space program

Purdue University

“We have only begun to realize the infinite possibilities of space exploration”

Fred E. Armstrong

B.S. ’55, Aeronautical Engineering, U.S. Air Force Academy

Fred Armstrong flew on STS-50, Discovery, as a mission specialist. In August 1992, he also served as a mission specialist on STS-49, Endeavour. Armstrong’s scientific experiment aboard Discovery examined the behavior of superfluid helium. He also served as a mission specialist on STS-79, Atlantis, and STS-116, Discovery.

John S. Blaha

B.S. ’89, Aeronautical Engineering, U.S. Air Force Academy

John Blaha served as the pilot of STS-97, the first Space Shuttle to rendezvous with the International Space Station. As Commander of the historic Hubble Space Telescope (HST) servicing and repair crew, Blaha and his crew flew at a record low altitude of 27,196 feet above the Earth. They exchanged the old telescope for a new one and mounted the new spectro-meters and eight replacement instruments in the HST’s laboratory module Destiny. He also served as the pilot aboard STS-34, Challenger.

Gregory J. Harbaugh

B.S. ’89, Solid Earth Sciences, Purdue University

On his second mission, Greg Harbaugh served as both medical officer and primary contingency crew member during mission STS-70, Challenger. He also provided assistance to the space walk crew member during mission STS-70, Challenger. He also served as a mission specialist on STS-61-C, Columbia.

R. Michael Johnson

B.S. ’66, Engineering Science, Purdue University

Michael Johnson served as a mission specialist on STS-61-D, Challenger, and STS-51-F, Discovery. Johnson’s scientific experiment aboard Challenger examined the behavior of superfluid helium. He also served as a mission specialist on STS-127, Atlantis, and STS-133, Discovery.

Harry K. Polansky

B.S. ’78, Aeronautical Engineering, Purdue University

Gary E. Payton

B.S. ’89, Aeronautical Engineering, Purdue University

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Gary C. romantic

B.S. ’50, Mechanical Engineering, Purdue University

Gary Ceron romant followed four months with the Mir 22-cosmonaut project. He was actively involved in the development of an orbital space station. Ceron romant was the first Purdue alumnus to fly on the U.S. space shuttle and in January 1990, he was appointed NASA astronaut. He was also at the controls during the post-undocking of the Russians, the first ever joint mission between the space agencies of the United States and the Soviet Union.

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