



AIAA Rocky Mountain Region Annual Awards Banquet Thursday, 17 May 2007

Guest Speaker

Dr. Roger Launius

Chair, Division of Space History
Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum
Washington, D.C.

“An Unintended Consequence of the International Geophysical Year: Eisenhower, Sputnik, and the Founding of NASA”



- Location:** Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum
7711 E. Academy Blvd, Denver, CO
- Museum Open: 5 pm
 - Dinner: 6 pm
 - Awards Presentation: 7 pm
 - Guest Speaker: 7:30pm

Cost: \$20 includes museum access, dinner buffet, awards event, and guest presentation
Attendance limited on first-come basis to AIAA members and their guests
(Actual cost exceeds \$50/person; AIAA Rocky Mtn Chapter sponsoring the difference)

Reservations with payment no later than Thursday 10 May 2007

Make check to AIAA, indicating number attending and AIAA affiliation.

Contact Elaine Heinrich for RSVP at:
elaine.m.heinrich@lmco.com, ph: 303-977-7094

Send check to:
Elaine Heinrich
Lockheed Martin Space Systems Co.
PO Box 179, Mail Stop 3457
Denver, CO 80201

Abstract

An Unintended Consequence of the International Geophysical Year: Eisenhower, Sputnik, and the Founding of NASA

In October 1957 the Soviet Union launched the first Earth-circling artificial satellite and the crisis that resulted led to numerous actions in the United States aimed at “remediating” a Cold War crisis. This included the establishment of a separate civilian space agency charged with the conduct of an official program of scientific and technological space exploration, consolidation of Department of Defense space activities, the passage of the National Defense Education Act, the creation of a Presidential Science Advisor, and a host of lesser actions. The politics of these changes is fascinating, and has been interpreted as an appropriate political response to a unique crisis situation. Interest groups, all for differing reasons, prodded national leaders to undertake large-scale efforts, something the president thought unnecessarily expensive and once set in place impossible to dismantle. But was the Sputnik crisis truly a crisis in any real sense? Was it made into one by interest groups who used it for their own ends? This paper will trace briefly some of the major themes associated with the IGY and Sputnik and describe the political construction of the crisis as it emerged in 1957-1958. It will also discuss something about the transformation of federal science and technology that took place in the aftermath of the “crisis” and how it set in train a series of processes and policies that did not unravel until the end of the Cold War.

Biography of Dr. Roger Launius

Roger D. Launius is chair of the Division of Space History at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Between 1990 and 2002 he served as chief historian of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. A graduate of Graceland College in Lamoni, Iowa, he received his Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, in 1982. He has written or edited more than twenty books on aerospace history, including *Space: A Journey to Our Future* (Tehabi Books, 2004); *Space Stations: Base Camps to the Stars* (Smithsonian Books, 2003), which received the AIAA’s history manuscript prize; *Flight: A Celebration of 100 Years in Art and Literature* (Welcome Books, 2003); *Reconsidering a Century of Flight* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003); *To Reach the High Frontier: A History of U.S. Launch Vehicles* (University Press of Kentucky, 2002); *Imagining Space: Achievements, Possibilities, Projections, 1950-2050* (Chronicle Books, 2001); *Reconsidering Sputnik: Forty Years Since the Soviet Satellite* (Harwood Academic, 2000); *Innovation and the Development of Flight* (Texas A&M University Press, 1999); *Frontiers of Space Exploration* (Greenwood Press, 1998, rev. ed. 2004); *Spaceflight and the Myth of Presidential Leadership* (University of Illinois Press, 1997); and *NASA: A History of the U.S. Civil Space Program* (Krieger Publishing Co., 1994, rev. ed. 2001). He is frequently consulted by the electronic and print media for his views on space issues, and has been a guest commentator on CNN, the News Hour with Jim Lehrer, ABC, CBS, NBC, and others. His research interests encompass all areas of U.S. space history and policy, especially political, social, and cultural aspects.