



Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum

George Carruthers Collection

Patti Williams

2021

National Air and Space Museum Archives
14390 Air & Space Museum Parkway
Chantilly, VA 20151
NASMRefDesk@si.edu
<https://airandspace.si.edu/archives>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	National Air and Space Museum Archives
Title:	George Carruthers Collection
Date:	1970s - 2010s
Identifier:	NASM.2020.0024
Creator:	Carruthers, George R.
Extent:	7.34 Cubic feet (9 boxes of various size, 1 folder, 1 map folder)
Language:	English .
Summary:	This collection consists of material documenting the space science career of Dr. George Carruthers. This collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

George and Deborah Carruthers, Gift, 2020, NASM.2020.0024

Processing Information

Arranged, described, and encoded by Patti Williams, 2021.

Preferred Citation

George Carruthers Collection, NASM.2020.0024, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

No restrictions on access

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on October 1, 1939, George Carruthers arrived at US Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) in 1964 with a Ph.D. in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from the University of Illinois. Carruthers was assigned to Talbot Chubb's upper air physics branch and joined an experimental rocket astronomy team to search for molecular hydrogen in space. This required sensitive detectors for the ultraviolet portion of the spectrum and Carruthers developed an electronographic camera that amplified images electronically for recording on photographic film. Guided by Chubb and mentored by Julian Holmes at NRL, Carruthers devised especially efficient and reliable electronographic cameras and flew them on rockets

in the late 1960s. In 1969, Carruthers responded to an open National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) "announcement of opportunity" to create experiments for follow-on Apollo flights. By the time NASA gave them approval, Carruthers and his NRL team had less than two years to design and build the first astronomical telescope that observed the universe from the Moon. Compact, highly sensitive, lightweight, and usable by Apollo 16 astronauts on the lunar surface, his highly sophisticated and versatile telescope could take direct images of the universe, as well as analyze its constituents. Carruthers remained at NRL for the rest of his career, continuing to develop and perfect a wide range of electronographic ultraviolet detectors for use both in astronomy and by the Department of Defense. After sounding rockets and Apollo, his devices flew on Skylab, and later on the Space Shuttle. In his later years, Carruthers became an avid mentor, inspiring local Washington DC school children to get practical experience in science and engineering.

Scope and Contents

This collection consists of the following items: National Technical Association Life Fellow Certificate; NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement Certificate; 1987 Black Engineer of the Year Award documentation; E.O. Hulbert Award for Science Award Certificate; University of Illinois Merit Award Certificate; scrapbook; two photograph albums; "Final Moon Mission" booklet; and congratulatory letter from President Jimmy Carter on receiving the NRL Commanding Officer's Award for Achievement in the Non-Disciplinary Field of Equal Employment Opportunity for 1985.

Arrangement

Arrangement by type.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Astronautics
- Space sciences
- Ultraviolet spectrometry

Types of Materials:

- Certificates
- Photograph albums

Names:

- Naval Research Laboratory (U.S.)