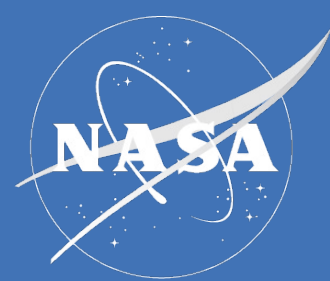


STENNIS SPACE CENTER

Profiles in Leadership



Joe Schuyler always envisioned working for NASA. Growing up, he was focused on pursuing a science or engineering career and always was interested in news about NASA and its missions. He joined classmates in watching shuttle launches on classroom televisions and was captivated by NASA's Voyager missions to explore the solar system and interstellar space. Schuyler initially earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from the U.S. Naval Academy and served as a U.S. Marine officer. Following his military service, he earned graduate degrees in business and engineering from Cornell University. By 2006, Schuyler was working for Lockheed Martin at NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, where he was closely involved in supporting the Space Shuttle Program. In 2010, Schuyler transitioned to the NASA team at Stennis as deputy chief of the Systems Engineering Division. The Pass Christian, Mississippi, resident subsequently became deputy director of the Stennis Engineering and Test Directorate, before becoming director of the office in 2018.

How would you describe the Stennis culture?

Stennis has a highly diverse community – where people not only come from nearby states but also from across the country. Being a small center in terms of workforce allows people to have a broader range of responsibilities and experiences as compared to other centers, which not only prepares them for future opportunities but makes them more valuable to the agency. Being smaller also makes us far more family-like, and having those close-knit relationships adds to the quality of the work experience for everyone.

What will you look back on most fondly about your NASA career?

I hope to reflect on the people and programs that I had a positive impact on as a leader.

How do you define leadership?

Leadership is the art and science of getting people to follow you. There are many different qualities that a leader can have to make them successful, but the most important one is taking care of their people. I spend time every day trying to ensure the people in my organization are trained and developed to be prepared for the next opportunity that they seek. Providing a clearer vision of the future for people helps them be more focused on what they need to do to be prepared, and it also makes them better overall employees. This builds a better bridge of trust between supervisor and employee, which is essential to a high performing organization.

What would you say to young people seeking a NASA career?

Nothing is out of your reach. Study hard, find your passion, and pursue it. If you are seeking a career in STEM, seek out internships in college that will provide valuable experiences that may set you apart from others. If you do not get a job with NASA immediately, work hard at the job you are able to get, and then continue to pursue NASA opportunities later on in life. We are always looking for people at all phases of their careers to fill mission critical positions.

What is the best advice you could offer someone seeking to serve in a leadership role?

Seek out roles as a team leader or a detail assignment as a supervisor. The more experience you get in these types of roles, the better you will understand if it is the right path for you. Do not be afraid to take on challenging or “thankless” assignments. These are the roles that must be done to make the entire mission successful. If you step up and accept those challenges, you not only gain experience in areas that help to develop you as a better engineer or leader, but other leaders will notice, and it will help you in terms of future advancement.



Joe Schuyler Director Engineering & Test Directorate

Was there one person who proved instrumental in your career growth?

I had a senior officer in the Marine Corps who was critical in helping to form my thought processes and leadership ideals that have helped me throughout my career. Sometimes, when faced with a challenging situation, I will try to reflect on his words and guidance to help in developing a solution or path forward.

What are you most proud of about your career thus far?

I am proud of the hard work and dedication of the entire team as we drive toward support of Stennis and NASA goals and objectives. Every day, our team works to solve issues and design solutions that help the agency in propulsion testing or technology development.

What advice can you offer for finding a good work-life balance?

You should always try to ensure your life is not all about work. While we value hardworking employees, it is essential that you do not get burned out. Never hesitate to reach out to your supervisor if you need help or support.