



Native Americans of NASA

Recognizing Diversity,
Honoring Heritage



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1. Aaron Yazzie—Diné (Navajo)

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

Mechanical Engineer, Planetary Sample Acquisition and Handling

- Yazzie designs mechanisms for acquiring geological samples from other planets.

2. Carol Harrison—Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe of Southampton County, Virginia

Langley Research Center

Associate of Science Degree Pre-Engineering and Associate of Applied Science Degree Mechanical Technology

Quality Assurance Specialist for Safety and Mission Assurance Office

- Performs automated coordinate measurement and analysis of machined parts as well as performs receipt inspection of flight project and safety critical hardware in the Materials Analysis and Quality Assurance Laboratory (MAQAL).

3. Cindy Campbell Spidel—Cherokee

Marshall Space Flight Center

Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Program Analyst

Budget Integration and Analysis for the Spacecraft and Vehicle Systems Department and Business Lead for the Launch Service Program at Marshall

- Spidel was elected to participate in the Leadership Development Program and is becoming a Special Emphasis Program Manager.

4. Edward V. Gonzales—Apache

Goddard Space Flight Center

Bachelor of Arts (in progress)

Diversity, Outreach, and STEM Engagement Manager

- Works with Native American, African-American, and Latinx populations to provide guidance and awareness.

5. George Gorospe—The Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico

Ames Research Center

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Research Engineer

Research Engineer II and SHARP Laboratory Manager

- Gorospe conducts and presents research in the field of prognostics and drive prognostic technology development within the application areas of aeronautics and space exploration.

6. Jason A. Jacobs—Lumbee (North Carolina)

Langley Research Center

Master of Library and Information Science, Lead Technical Information Specialist

OCIO-Office of the Chief Information Officer

- Jacobs provides high-quality research, access, and delivery of NASA scientific and technical information and resources and NASA library services to Center and Agency scientists, engineers, and customers. He also serves as Alternate STI manager for NASA Langley.

7. Jeanne S. Lynch—Cherokee

Johnson Space Center

Bachelors of Science in Electrical Engineering, Florida State University

Masters of Science in Space Systems, Florida Institute of Technology

Associate Chief Financial Officer at Johnson Space Center

- Lynch assists the CFO and Deputy CFO in the day-to-day management of the organization with a focus on improving organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

8. Jeremiah F. O'Callahan—Haudenosaunee, Onondaga, Eel Clan Glenn Research Center

Bachelor of Business Administration, International Business

Contracting Officer

- O'Callahan negotiates, awards, administers, and enforces binding contracts between NASA, the military, other Federal Agencies, and civilian corporations.

9. Johnny Stephenson—Echota Cherokee

Marshall Space Flight Center

Bachelor of Science in Engineering, University of Alabama, Huntsville

Director/Office of Strategic Analysis and Communications, Marshall Space Flight Center

- Stephenson leads an organization of around 150 civil service and contractor personnel in providing objective analysis and comprehensive communications to support policy, program, and budget decisions for MSFC.

10. Josef Sanchez—Mescalero Apache

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Master of Science in Aerospace Engineering, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Integration and Test Engineer

- Sanchez is lead Integration and Instrumentation Engineer on JPL's ASPIRE Program I integrating hardware and software on a spacecraft level ensuring that the vehicle is ready to launch and successfully perform its mission.

11. Joseph Connolly—Haudenosaunee, Onondaga, Wolf Clan

Glenn Research Center

Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering, and Masters of Science in Control Systems Engineering

Aerospace Engineer

- Connolly conducts and leads research teams in the area of dynamic modeling and control of air breathing propulsion systems.

12. Kenneth K. Attocknie—Comanche, Caddo

Johnson Space Center

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

System Integration and Test Engineer

- Attocknie trains and advises astronauts and flight controllers in preparation for final certification of mission support for the International Space Station.

13. Marcellus Proctor—Piscataway-Conoy

Goddard Space Flight Center

Master of Science in Electrical Engineering

Assistant Chief of Operations, Electrical Engineering Division – Code 560

- Proctor oversees the day-to-day operations of Code 560 to ensure excellence in the design, development, and testing of flight electrical/electronic systems and associated technologies for GSFC and NASA missions.

14. Michel Liu—Navajo

Ames Research Center

Bachelor of Science in Astronomy, University of California, Berkeley

Director, Safety and Mission Assurance, NASA Ames Research Center

- Liu leads the organization responsible for saving the lives of our employees, visitors, and the public enabling missions to be safe and successful.

15. Orson N. John—Diné (Navajo)

Goddard Space Flight Center

Bachelor of Science in Physics

Quality and Reliability Engineer

- John is a Quality and Reliability Engineer performing failure mode, fault, and risk analyses for the Advanced Topographic Laser Altimeter System (ATLAS) for the ICESat-2 mission at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. In addition to ATLAS, Orson has worked on several different missions at Goddard, including MAVEN, OSIRIS-REX, and GEDI.

16. Powtawche N. Valerino—Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Doctor of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering, Rice University

and a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, Stanford University

Navigation Engineer at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

- Valerino designs maneuvers that spacecraft execute to stay on a given trajectory.

17. Randall C. Acosta—Mescalero Apache

Jet Propulsion Laboratory

Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering

and a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering (in progress)

Systems Verification and Validation Engineering

- Acosta coordinates test planning and execution for verification of requirements and validation of mission-level capabilities.

18. Raquel L. Redhouse—Diné (Navajo)

Glenn Research Center

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Aerospace Engineer, John H. Glenn Research Center

- Redhouse is an NMSystems Engineer in the Human Spaceflight Systems Branch at John H. Glenn Research Center.

19. Renee P. Wynn—Chippewa

NASA Headquarters

Bachelor of Arts in Economics

Chief Information Officer, NASA

- Wynn provides leadership, planning, policy direction, and oversight for the management of NASA information and information technology in accordance with several laws.

20. Seth Begay—Navajo (Towering House Clan)

Langley Research Center

Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering from Old Dominion

University Computer Engineer at Langley Research Center

- Begay works in the Flight Software Systems Branch designing, developing, and testing flight and ground software.

21. Steve L. Lighthill—Karuk (Northern California Tribe)

Armstrong Flight Research Center

Associate in Fine Arts, with several additional courses in design, computer design, publication design, and computer imagery

Visual Communications Manager

- Acosta coordinates test planning and execution for verification of requirements and validation of mission-level capabilities.

