

James R. Thompson



Mr. Thompson was named Orbital's Vice Chairman in April 2002 and its President and Chief Operating Officer in October 1999. He previously served as Executive Vice President and General Manager of the company's Launch Systems Group and as Chief Technical Officer.

Prior to joining Orbital in 1991, Mr. Thompson served two years each as NASA's deputy administrator in Washington, D.C. and for three years as head of its Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Before becoming Marshall's director in 1986, he served three years as deputy director for technical operations at Princeton University's Plasma Physics Laboratory. From March to June 1986, he served as the vice chairman of the NASA task force inquiring into the cause of the Space Shuttle Challenger accident.

Previously, Mr. Thompson spent 20 years with NASA at Marshall in various positions, including associate director for engineering in the Science and Engineering Directorate and manager of the Space Shuttle Main Engine Project in the Shuttle Projects Office. He began his professional career in 1960 as a development engineer with Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in West Palm Beach, Florida. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1958 to 1960, and was stationed at Green Cove Springs, Florida, as an administrative officer in the Atlantic Fleet.

Mr. Thompson is the recipient of many prestigious space industry awards, including the National Space Club's Wehrner von Braun Space Flight Award, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers' Holley Medal, and NASA's Distinguished Public Service Medal and Distinguished Service Medals. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the American Astronautical Society.

Mr. Thompson received a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Florida.