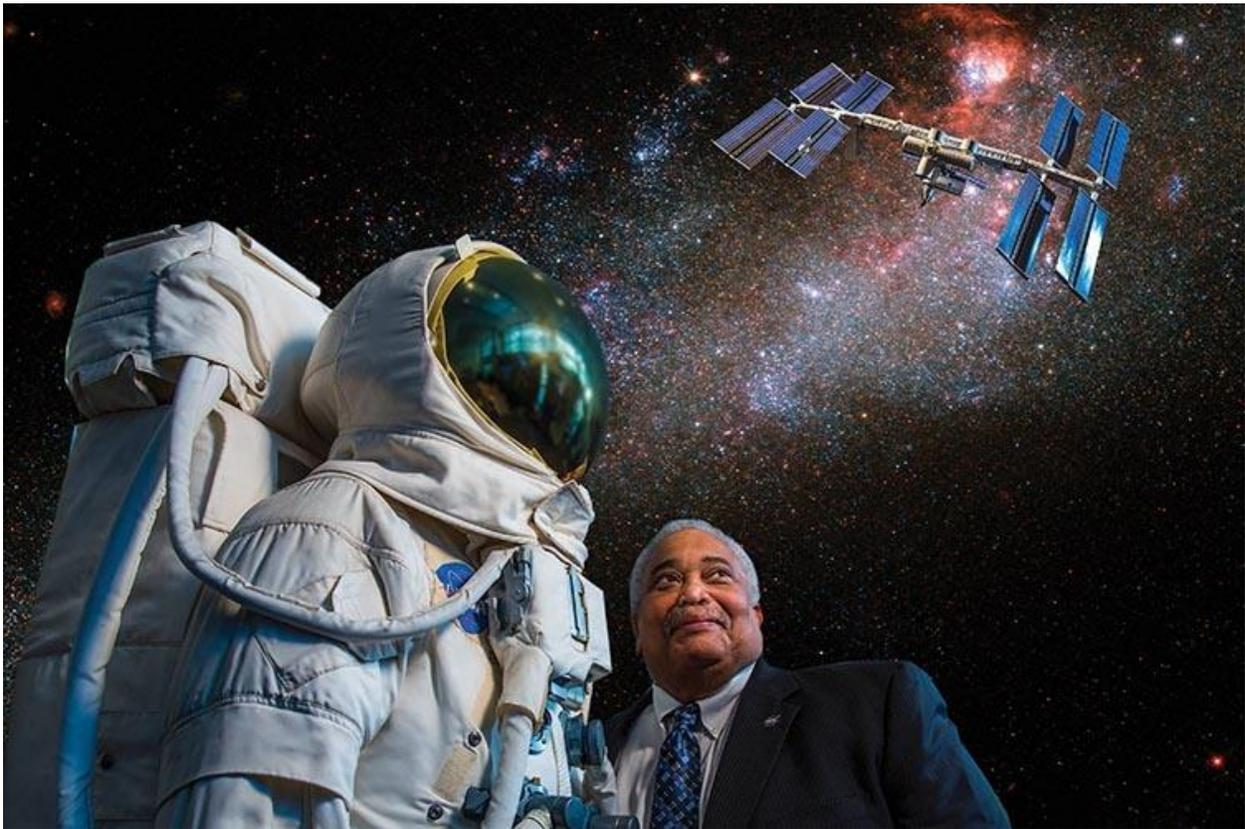


Watcher of the Skies

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

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JEFFREY MACMILLAN / PHOTO ILLUSTRATION WITH BACKGROUND COMPLIMENTS OF NASA
The night sky has special meaning for Glenn Delgado '84, associate administrator in the Office of Small Business Programs at NASA. When he gazes up and knows the International Space Station may be passing overhead, he's filled with pride because he helped contribute to the creation of that feat of aerospace technology.

He feels the same pride — and a lot of awe — when he sees photographs of Martian landscapes beamed back to Earth on his computer. The images are generated by Curiosity, NASA's robotic Mars rover. "Lots of those pictures make me go "Whoa!" Delgado says. "So many small businesses have contributed to the Space Station, and many pieces of Curiosity were built by small businesses. I take a lot of pride in that

because, in a sense, I helped build them by arranging contracts that went into their creation.”

He’s also pleased that UNH will help develop the Geosynchronous Littoral Imaging and Monitoring Radiometer (GLIMR) for NASA. Though Delgado wasn’t directly involved in the GLIMR project, which will study coastal ecosystems on Earth, he says NASA is dedicated to protecting our natural resources.

“Humanity won’t be around long if we don’t take care of the planet,” he says.

Delgado believes it’s important that NASA’s mission directors ensure that a good portion of their service and manufacturing contracts go to small businesses.

“Small business is the heart of our economy,” he says. “Small businesses hold four times more patents than large businesses do. Walk down the main street of any town — every storefront lining that street is a small business. If we don’t help small businesses, our nation’s economy will die.”

When Delgado joined NASA in 2006, he began implementing new procedures that made it easier for small businesses to qualify for contracts. In 2014, those companies received \$4.8 billion in contracts; by 2018, that number had swelled to \$5.8 billion, a 22 percent growth.

His good work didn’t go unnoticed. In 2009, the Small Business Association recognized his new policies with a Federal Government Best Practices citation. In 2010, he received the NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal. In addition, the Congressional Black Caucus honored him with the Small Business Champion Living Legends Award.

The awards are gratifying, but Delgado credits his success to the people who work in the office with him, and his parents for instilling within him a strong work ethic.

“I come from the projects in New York City, and my parents worked hard to send me to a Catholic school,” he says. “My father, John, was a supply clerk at Sears, and he told us, ‘No matter what you want to be, whether it’s president of the United States or a janitor cleaning toilets, you do the best job you can do.’”

After graduating high school, Delgado joined the Air Force to help cover the cost of college, then applied to UNH because “it was ranked the second-best school in health studies in the nation,” he says. “I attended classes from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., then worked at a hospital from 4 to midnight.” He graduated with a degree in health administration and strategic planning, with the aim of going into hospital administration, then received an MBA from Marymount University.

Instead, he joined the Department of the Navy’s Office of Small Business Programs and later served as the director of small business for the Naval Air Systems Command before going to NASA, where he continues to watch the skies.

“Space exploration is a good thing,” he says. “We need to see what’s out there. It’s pretty small-minded to think that we’re the only life in the universe. But I’m not the guy to do it,” he adds with a laugh. “I’m too claustrophobic to sit in a space capsule.”

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