

# THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY SELECTS THE JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE TEAM FOR THE WERNHER VON BRAUN MEMORIAL AWARD

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, FLORIDA, USA, May 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Space Society (NSS) is proud to present the Wernher von Braun Memorial Award to NASA's [James Webb Space Telescope](#)'s science team. The award will be accepted at the NSS's 41st annual [International Space Development Conference® \(ISDC®\)](#), which will be held on May 25-28, 2023, in Frisco, Texas, a suburb of Dallas.

Accepting the award will be Dr. Eric Smith, the Associate Director for Research in the Science Mission Directorate's Astrophysics Division at NASA Headquarters and Program Scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope. Dr. Smith is the NASA scientist responsible for the Webb science content and is also responsible for monitoring and managing the science program for both the Webb Telescope and Hubble, ensuring their missions remain viable and true to NASA's strategic objectives.



Dr. Eric Smith, Program Scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope

"The JWST has transformed how we look at the universe in a remarkably short period of time," said Anita Gale, CEO of the NSS. "After it's very nearly flawless deployment, a major feat in itself, the Webb has returned incredible science from the furthest reaches of the universe to never-before-seen details of our own solar system, with NASA coordinating research teams and partners from around the world. I can't think of a more worthy recipient for this prestigious award."

Launched in late 2021 after more than a decade of preparation, the JWST performed a near-flawless deployment shortly after leaving Earth orbit. With over 400 specific mechanical actions

required, none of which had been tested in microgravity, this was itself an impressive achievement.

Six months later, the telescope reached its working orbit at the Sun-Earth L2 Lagrange point, a stable orbit in space well beyond that of the Moon. Once there and fully commissioned, the 21-foot (6.5) meter telescope began its record-breaking work.

Webb operates at infrared frequencies. The combination of sensitive instrumentation with its massive primary mirror the telescope can see farther and more clearly than any previous observatory of its kind. Discoveries from existing and newly identified targets began to accumulate almost immediately. The first images were unveiled on July 12, 2022.



Credit: James Vaughan

The ever-growing list of Webb discoveries includes direct imaging of exoplanets and the identification of key gases in their atmospheres; tracking clouds on Saturn's moon Titan; identifying new details in a cluster of galaxies; imaging the incredibly faint rings around Uranus; capturing the galactic merger of Arp 220; discovering sand-bearing clouds on a remote exoplanet; measuring the temperature of a rocky exoplanet; and observing galaxies seen in their earliest years, when the universe was just 350 million years old – about two percent of its current age.

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Webb has exceeded all expectations and captured awe-inspiring images and spectra of the distant universe, objects in our solar system, and everything in between that will inspire generations to come.”

*Dr. Eric Smith, Program Scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope*

“On behalf of NASA's James Webb Space Telescope team, we are honored by this prestigious award,” said Dr. Eric Smith, associate director for research in the Astrophysics Division at NASA Headquarters and program scientist for the James Webb Space Telescope. “Webb has exceeded all expectations and captured awe-inspiring images and amazing spectra of the distant universe, objects in our solar system and everything in between that will inspire

generations to come.”

The Wernher von Braun Memorial Award is given in odd-numbered years to recognize excellence

in management of and leadership for a space-related project that is significant and successful and shows strong management skills and team cohesion.

The National Space Society was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society. The NSS is the preeminent citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement. To learn more about the NSS and its mission to establish humanity as a spacefaring species, visit us on the web at [space.nss.org](https://space.nss.org).

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