

THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY MOURNS THE PASSING OF HILDRETH “HAL” WALKER

Walker was an International Civic Leader and was Instrumental in Lunar Laser-Ranging Research During the Apollo Program

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, CA, UNITED STATES, December 10, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Space Society (NSS) is saddened by the recent passing of a beloved member of the organization, Hildreth “Hal” Walker Jr. at the age of 91.

Walker began working in missile defense systems in 1959, after a stint with the Navy, advancing into laser research in 1964. He was the first to fire the KORAD-1500 laser at the Moon after the Apollo 11 Moon landing, aiming at a reflective target placed there by astronauts Armstrong and Aldrin. It was the first of a number of “retroreflectors” placed on the Moon with which scientists were able to measure its exact distance from the Earth by reflecting high powered lasers off the mirrors.

Walker and his wife, Dr. Bettye Walker, later formed an organization to serve young Black men called [A-MAN](#)—the African American Male Achievers Network—based in Los Angeles and which later expanded to Cape Town, South Africa, at the invitation of President Nelson Mandela. Walker and his wife also set up science and technology programs in township schools across the country. He was active in the NSS’s Los Angeles chapter, called OASIS—Organization for the Advancement of Space Industrialization and Settlement—and was instrumental in forming an NSS chapter in South Africa as well, the Cape Town Space Society. His work touched thousands of young people.

Chairman of the NSS Board of Governors, Karlton Johnson, said, “Hal Walker was a titan in both Los Angeles and in Cape Town, South Africa. He was an accomplished researcher at a time when



Hildreth "Hal" Walker, Jr.

it was extremely rare to find Black Americans in positions of that kind. He was very active in his communities and beloved by many. His work with both the Los Angeles and Cape Town chapters of the NSS and with young men of color in those cities will be his everlasting legacy.”

Past President and current VP of OASIS, Seth Potter, said, “One of Hal’s greatest accomplishments was to teach us the importance of passing the torch of knowledge, and enabling us to discover that when we light another’s torch, our own burns brighter.”

Walker accrued many honors over his

lifetime, including the Humanitarian Award and Trophy presented by the Caucus of Producers, Writers & Directors (shared with his wife), and the 2020 Unsung Heroes Award, presented by California State Senator Holly J. Mitchell.

Walker will be remembered for his work in advancing STEM careers for young Black men and women, as well as working past barriers to minorities in the Space Race era. More info on Walker’s many achievements can be found [in this article](#).

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*Karlton Johnson, NSS CEO and
Chairman of the Board of
Governors*



Karlton Johnson, CEO of the National Space Society

ABOUT THE NSS

The National Space Society is the preeminent non-partisan citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement, reaching millions through its membership, numerous outreach channels, and media activities. The NSS was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute and the L5 Society. To learn more about the NSS and its mission to establish humanity as a spacefaring species, visit us on the web at nss.org.

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