

PASSWORD



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Johnny Cash and Drugs: An Interview with Ed Agan about the Arrest of Johnny Cash on October 4, 1965 in El Paso

By Mark Cioc-Ortega and Ed Agan

Editor's Note: Johnny Cash was arrested on October 4, 1965, at the El Paso International Airport, for possession of 668 Dexedrine and 475 Equanil pills, hidden inside his guitar case. He had purchased the drugs—the first a stimulant, the second a sedative—in Ciudad Juárez earlier in the day and transported them across the U.S.-Mexico border, which was illegal. He spent one night at the El Paso County Jail before posting a \$1500 bond at the Federal Court House and departing El Paso. He later pleaded guilty to the charge of “willfully smuggling and concealing drugs after importation” and returned to El Paso in early March 1966 for sentencing. U.S. District Court Judge D. W. Suttle levied a \$1000 fine and gave him a 30-day suspended sentence. Ed Agan, a member of the El Paso Police Department, played a pivotal role in Cash's arrest. I asked him to sit down for an interview about the incident.

Mark Cioc-Ortega: Tell us about your role in the arrest of Johnny Cash. Was he known to the Police Department as a drug user or was his arrest just a matter of happenstance?

Ed Agan: This began as a completely chance encounter. I and my partner Armando Nava were driving down South El Paso Street and my eye caught a well-dressed man—black silk suit with a black velvet collar and cuffs, Beatle boots, and long hair—who was peering into a pawn shop, looking at the guns behind the shop window. Police officers are trained to look for things that seem suspicious, and something seemed suspicious, so we pulled our patrol car around the corner and walked up to him. He was clearly annoyed at us for interrupting his day but the conversation soon turned friendly. Neither of us recognize him at first. When we asked for his I.D., he pulled out his wallet—one of those once-fashionable wallets with layers of plastic sleeves holding photos, credit cards, and I.D.s—and I saw “John Cash” written on one of them. It was at that point that I looked more closely at his face and realized that it was *the* Johnny Cash, the famous country singer of “Walk the Line” fame. He told us that he was a gun collector, which is why he had been peering so intently into the pawn shop window. He said he especially liked the Colt .45, or “Peacemaker,” the legendary gun of the American West. I suggested that he visit McNellis Camera and Gun Shop at 307 N. Oregon,



Figure 1. Mugshot of Johnny Cash. This photo was taken when the El Paso Sheriff's Department booked him in the El Paso County Jail at the request of Customs. Photo courtesy of the author.

just a few blocks away, if he was interested in purchasing a vintage gun. The owner, Bob McNellis, was a gun enthusiast, who bought and sold used guns, especially ones with some historical value.

Cioc-Ortega: That was your first encounter with Cash. Did you see him later that day before or after he went to Ciudad Juárez?

Agan: That was our only encounter with Cash until his court date. Of course, me and my partner did not often come across celebrities while on the beat, so that stuck in our heads. But neither of us thought about it much after we left. He had allayed our suspicions. We just continued with our day.

Cioc-Ortega: So how did you come to play a role in his arrest?

Agan: To understand that, you need to know something about the drug scene in El Paso back in the 1960s. Keep in mind that Cash's arrest occurred before Richard Nixon had become president and declared a War on Drugs. Heroin



Figure 2. Johnny Cash is escorted from the federal courthouse to the County Jail on October 5, 1965 to be released on bail. Apodaca Bail Bonds put up the \$1500 bail that allowed Cash to be released. Photo courtesy of the author.

was illegal in the United States, but it was still legal in Mexico. That meant that El Pasoans who were addicted to heroin were free to cross the border whenever they wanted a fix (needle injection). The El Paso Police Department monitored the activities of these drug users but did not otherwise interfere with their comings and goings. All known drug addicts (they were easy to identify because of their track marks) were required to fill out a Customs form before they crossed the border into Ciudad Juárez. They handed the original to the Customs official and were told to keep the carbon copy with them while in Mexico. When they returned, they would hand in their copy to Customs and it would be matched up to the original. This gave law enforcement the ability to track their daily visitations to Mexico and make sure they didn't bring drugs into the U.S. when they returned. It wasn't an ideal arrangement, but it helped control the flow of drugs without infringing on the right of drug addicts to cross the border. When Mexico adopted the U.S.-inspired War on Drugs in the early 1970s—under heavy pressure from the Nixon administration—this arrangement of course went by the wayside.

Cioc-Ortega: Can you tell us more about the drug scene in Ciudad Juárez in those days?

Agan: The drug queen of Ciudad Juárez was Ignacia Jasso la Viuda de
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González, better known as “La Nacha.” She and her husband got into the drug business in the 1920s and she took full control after his death, dominating the traffic in heroin, morphine, and marijuana for the next 50 years. Ciudad Juárez had a drug district within walking distance of the border and heroin addicts would go to her establishment to get a fix.

Cioc-Ortega: Was Cash one of these “heroin tourists”?

Agan: No. Our next encounter with Cash was entirely indirect. At some point we went down to the U.S.-Mexico border crossing to talk to the returning addicts. This was part of our normal routine. We would chat with the addicts and ask them if they had seen or heard anything out of the ordinary. Most of them knew that we weren’t there to harass them, we just wanted to identify and track any possible drug smugglers. Some of the addicts were helpful, others were not. Anyway, on that particular day one of the addicts told us that he’d seen an unusually dressed man purchasing drugs down the street from where he had gotten a fix. He hadn’t seen the person there before. And his description matched the profile of Johnny Cash all the way down to the Beatle boots.

Cioc-Ortega: Was that enough evidence to justify an arrest?

Agan: The testimony of a drug addict does not constitute “probable cause.” We knew perfectly well from our police training that we could not make an arrest. We had not seen Cash cross over to Ciudad Juárez. We had not witnessed the alleged drug deal. We had not seen him cross back to El Paso. In fact, we had not seen him since our encounter on South El Paso Street and that encounter had allayed, not raised, our suspicions. My partner and I were pretty much “by the book” officers and we knew we didn’t have probable cause to arrest Cash. However, we also knew that U.S. Customs and Border agents operated under a different set of federal laws and guidelines. They had more leeway when it came to tracking leads on drug smuggling and fewer restrictions on searches and seizures. So, we contacted the local U.S. Customs and Border office and alerted them to the situation. Customs agents then tracked him down at the El Paso International Airport as he was about to board a plane back to California and they arrested him when they found the illicit pills inside his guitar case. The October 5 edition of the *El Paso Times* stated that I had made the arrest, but in fact the arrest was made by Customs agents. I never knew the federal agent’s name, but he deserves the credit for making the arrest.

Cioc-Ortega: What kind of publicity did the arrest bring you, positive or negative? Did you become a celebrity? Did you become notorious?

Agan: I became famous with my five children, that’s for sure. At one time

was so tired I lost my faculties. I saw the customs agent staked out on the corner, but I just didn't seem to care." To me, that simply doesn't ring true. There was no stakeout by a Customs agent. My partner and I were the ones that alerted Customs later.

Cioc-Ortega: Have you read Steve Turner's biography, *The Man Called CASH: The Life, Love and Faith of an American Legend* (Nashville, 2004)? He too is under the impression that Cash's drug dealer in Ciudad Juárez was under surveillance and that is why Cash got nabbed. I'm glad you are setting the record straight.



Figure 4. Johnny Cash with his Wife Vivian Liberto and his Attorney Woodrow Bean. Photo courtesy of the author.

Agan: It's likely that Cash himself never fully realized how he got caught. After all, he pleaded guilty and therefore no one in law enforcement had to testify, neither I nor the Customs agents. *The Man Called CASH* is a very sympathetic biography that was sponsored and funded by the John R. Cash Revocable Fund, but even it portrays Cash as a man in truly desperate straits in the years 1964 to 1966. He crashed a Cadillac, sank a boat, and overturned a tractor. While on a fishing expedition to Los Padres National Forest, he inadvertently started a forest fire; over 500 acres got burned and Cash had to pay \$82,000 in restitution. He was busted at least once for driving while drunk. He was banned from the Grand Ol' Opry for his erratic behavior. His marriage to Vivian overlapped with his budding relationship with June Carter, whom he would later marry. He was a mess. Many years later, of course, Cash finally escaped his drug and alcohol dependency, but not before putting himself and his family through hell.

Cioc-Ortega: In 1984, nearly twenty years after Cash's arrest, someone in local law enforcement attempted to blackmail Cash. Do you remember this incident?

Agan: I remember the case and there is also a good write up in the March 7, 1985 issue of the *El Paso Times*. Jesus Gurrola was his name. He had served as a sergeant with the El Paso Sheriff's Department from 1979-1983, before being fired. I don't know why he was fired. His extortion letter to Cash was dated January 1984 and was handwritten. It did not specify a sum that he was demanding. The letter was half fan mail and half extortion. He told Cash that he "admired" him for always having "fought back" and

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then threatened to send Cash's arrest record and mug photo to *People* and other magazines unless Cash was willing to negotiate a settlement. It was a clumsy attempt at extortion and Gurrola was readily convicted and sentenced to 5 years supervised probation, fined \$500, and ordered to serve 500 hours of community service. But he probably did have documents of some sort or another, as the Sheriff's Department did indicate that their documentation on the 1965 case (including photographs and fingerprints) were missing from their files. These would have involved his incarceration in the El Paso County Jail on the night of October 4, 1965, after his initial arrest.

Cioc-Ortega: Thank you for taking the time to discuss the Johnny Cash case.

Agan: You're welcome. It was enjoyable to reminisce about this case. This is the first time that this part of the story has appeared in print.





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New Mexico's "Space Hall" and the Role of Space in the Southwest

By Clara Roberts

The New Mexico Museum of Space History sits nestled at the foot of the Sacramento Mountains in the city of Alamogordo, New Mexico. It has a sprawling campus that includes open-air displays, a memorial garden, and a dome theater and planetarium. The main building somewhat resembles a rocket launcher, with four stories of gleaming, gold-tinted reflective windows flanked by two adobe pillars on either side. The sun often reflects off the block-shaped museum, contributing to the old nickname of the "golden cube." Many residents still refer to the museum as the "Space Hall," a name reflective of the museum's original conception as the International Space Hall of Fame.

New Mexico—both its land and its people—has been heavily involved in the space industry since 1945, when White Sands Proving Ground was created to test and develop German V-2 rockets at the end of the Second World War. Its contributions are vast, making it a fitting place to build a monument of sorts for the people who made those achievements possible. The secluded location, mild climate, and relatively low population of the New Mexican desert presented scientists and engineers the perfect work space. However, it is those exact same reasons that prevent the Space Hall from receiving the kind of wide-spread recognition that its name suggests. The Space Hall was built with the hopes of putting Alamogordo on the map by highlighting the skills and genius of those figures involved in the space industry. But the dusty desert is too far removed and much too insignificant in the popular eye to ever truly appeal to a wider fan base.

Bearing in mind that one of the goals of the Space Hall was to bring more recognition to the achievements made in the space industry, it may seem odd to choose a location as remote as Alamogordo, New Mexico. The state itself only has a population of just over two million—not an ideal location for a museum attempting to gain international recognition.¹ However, once one considers the significant contributions Alamogordo and the surrounding areas have made to discoveries and developments of aerospace technologies, it becomes a bit clearer. A drive along U.S. Highway 70 from Alamogordo to Las Cruces would be sufficient proof of the area's significant work in rocket and missile development. A sign on the right-hand side of the road informs travelers of entering White Sands Missile Range (WSMR), dubbed as the "Birthplace of America's Missile and Space Activity."² Highway 70 dissects White Sands Missile Range and it is easy



Figure 1. The New Mexico Museum of Space History. Originally called the International Space Hall of Fame, the building was designed to somewhat resemble a rocket launcher. Photo courtesy of the author.

for one to imagine why it was chosen as a place to test America's rocket and missile technology. The El Paso-based Fort Bliss shares a border with WSMR and as a result often contributed to projects and technologies developed at the site.

The drive from Alamogordo to Las Cruces is seventy-plus miles of empty desert and nearly perpetual sunny skies. Once a traveler makes it over the Organ Mountains through the San Augustin Pass, it is not long before they are once again reminded of the importance of space to New Mexico. The Space Murals Museum sticks out from the side of the mountain, greeting visitors and residents alike with a replica of the Challenger shuttle alongside a large water tank featuring a space-themed mural painting. This display clearly shows that the space industry has affected the hearts of New Mexican inhabitants as much as the state has affected the industry.

The space industry has had a presence in New Mexico since the 1940s and has made significant contributions over the years. New Mexico's participation in the space industry began in the early 20th century. In 1930, Robert H. Goddard, known as "The Father of Modern Rocketry," came to Roswell, New Mexico to begin his research and work on rockets. Only two years after his arrival, Goddard launched the "first gyroscopic controlled rocket."³ Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Proving Ground, including Trinity Site, were created in the 1940s. The United States' involvement in the disarmament of Germany in 1945 resulted in the U.S. possessing German V-2 rockets; White Sands Proving Ground was created in order to test and further develop those rockets.⁴ Research on the biological effects of flight was conducted at Holloman Air Force Base during the 1950s. Animal testing was done at this facility and "HAM," the famous chimp who went to space, was trained there for the Project Mercury Program. White Sands Missile Range, the area's official name since 1958, has housed over a hundred rocket and missile tests over the last seven decades and significantly contributed to the development of space technologies.⁵

White Sands and Test Rockets

White Sands Missile Range marks itself as the "birth place of America's rocket and missile activity" and with the substantial list of achievements and discoveries made there, it is clear to see how true that is. New Mexico continues to contribute to the success of the American space program even today. Between 1945 and 1964, over 132 systems were tested at White Sands Missile Range and the figures continue to increase as time goes on.⁶ The expansive, isolated land and the desert climate of New Mexico offers scientists and engineers the ability to launch, recover, and

then study the effects of that launch on the objects they are developing. This ability to recover objects is not an option at other testing facilities like Cape Kennedy in Florida or Edwards Air Force Base in California because of their respective positions on the east and west coasts.⁷ Therefore New Mexico has been, and possibly always will be, an asset to both military and civilian rocket, missile, and space programs. Yet it is also this isolation that will always prevent a place like the Space Hall from truly gaining an international recognition.⁸

One might question why the already existing Fort Bliss was not an easier option for these missile tests and the answer can be found in the landscape. Fort Bliss, though large, is situated in the heart of the populous El Paso, whereas WSMR is not. The New Mexican desert hosts an arid and temperate climate as well as a semi-isolated location. These factors both make it an ideal place to test and develop rockets, missiles, and space technology. With an average temperature around sixty degrees Fahrenheit and an annual rainfall rate of less than fourteen inches, Alamogordo and the surrounding areas are a near-perfect place for the development and testing of space vehicles of all kinds.⁹ They provide the right environment and situation "for research, development and implementation of space probes" and a climate that encourages work year-round.¹⁰ Though the dirt and wind present their own problems, they are certainly easier to work around than snow or rain, especially when it comes to launching rockets. New Mexico also has the land available to develop and test rockets with minimal interference from civilians.

Military personnel and research scientists have been vital to the contributions made in New Mexico, most especially two Americans and two Germans: John P. Stapp, Clyde W. Tombaugh, Wernher von Braun, and Ernst Steinhoff. John Stapp worked at Holloman Airforce Base and conducted extensive research into the effects of acceleration and deceleration on humans at White Sands Proving Ground. He developed revolutionary technology and equipment that enhanced a human being's ability to travel at high speeds. Part of his research included the Daisy Track, a nickname for the rocket-propelled sled used in the tests. He earned the title of "The Fastest Man on Earth" after he traveled on a rocket sled at 632 mph in five seconds.¹¹ Clyde Tombaugh, a renowned astronomer, did extensive research into many aspects of space. His work focused mainly on the exploration of the stars, outer space, and astronomical bodies found there. Perhaps his most famous achievement was the discovery of Pluto, a dwarf planet, in 1930.¹²

After the end of the Second World War, under the name "Operation Paperclip," the U.S. Army brought a group of scientists and engineers from Germany. Because of the operation, both Wernher von Braun and Ernst Steinhoff relocated to the United States and became involved in

the American rocket industry. German V-2 rockets were transported to White Sands Proving Ground after the war and Braun came to continue his research and development of these rockets.¹³ In addition to developing rockets, Braun worked on Project Apollo and aided in the launching of both Explorer I (America's first satellite) and the Space Shuttle.¹⁴ Braun and Operation Paperclip both have connections to Fort Bliss as well, but his contributions to the space industry and rocketry were all achieved in New Mexico, at what is now WSMR. Ernst Steinhoff worked at Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Proving Ground, developing guidance systems for rockets and missiles. He contributed greatly to "real time computing for missile flight guidance and control." Because of Steinhoff's work, data processing and guidance systems have been significantly improved.¹⁵

It was the accomplishments of these four men—and many others besides them—that later inspired the creation of the Space Hall.

The International Space Hall of Fame

The International Space Hall of Fame began as a simple idea, born from the mind of former Alamogordo mayor, Dwight Ohlinger, in 1973.¹⁶ Ohlinger wished to create the Space Hall to commemorate individuals who have impacted the space industry through their research, development and testing of technologies, and space exploration. Together with both state and local support, he took on the project—one that would soon prove more difficult than anticipated. All those involved aimed to honor the achievements made by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Department of Defense throughout the years, especially those specifically obtained in the areas surrounding Alamogordo.¹⁷ Through its recognition of international figures, the museum hoped to bring renown to both the city of Alamogordo and the state of New Mexico. Potential for increased revenue and the improvement of local economy was also a goal of the founders. The project took some time, but after three long years Ohlinger's vision became a reality and the Space Hall opened to the public on November 23, 1976.¹⁸

The development of the Space Hall was a long process spanning several years. With the exception of some funding issues, the project had a relatively smooth beginning. The project was heavily supported and both local and international figures anticipated a physical representation of the spirit of the space industry, especially in New Mexico. The New Mexico state legislation praised the plans and future potential for the Space Hall. State Senator Montoya from New Mexico said that "Alamogordo [is] a fitting site for an international shrine of space history" because of its involvement in research and testing of nuclear technology as well as other contributions to science and space



Figure 2. The Little Joe 2 Rocket. The Little Joe 2 rocket was utilized in testing for the Apollo spacecraft at White Sands Missile Range. Photo courtesy of the author.

technology.¹⁹ The plans were enthusiastically praised by New Mexico Senator Jon Conway after they were presented to the governor's office by the architectural firm Charles Nolan and Associates.²⁰ In early 1974 it was officially announced that twenty municipal governments around New Mexico and their respective Chambers of Commerce supported the Space Hall project in Alamogordo.²¹ The positive feedback and excitement about the project was a good sign that the Space Hall was off to a good start.

The Space Hall project gained significant backing from local, national, and international organizations. The International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), the Smithsonian Administration, New Mexico State University (NMSU), and local United States Air Force and Army installations all backed the project eagerly and each organization provided valuable resources. The foundation of the Space Hall would not have been as successful without these endorsements. The IAA provided a committee to choose eligible candidates to be honored at the Space Hall. All space artifacts owned by the United States are managed and cared for by the Smithsonian Administration, and their co-operation provided the Space Hall access to exhibit materials.²² New Mexico State University, whose contribution was perhaps the most vital, provided land for the location of the building.

The International Academy of Astronautics, the Smithsonian Administration, and New Mexico State University believed in the goals the museum was trying to achieve. The organizations agreed that the momentous feats which had been achieved in the space industry should be celebrated. And what better place to commemorate the men and women who had greatly contributed than a place which had brought many of those accomplishments to life? The idea of the Space Hall was said to be "an educational concept which will be unequalled elsewhere in the nation or world, as well as a tourist attraction" and with such high words of praise it is no wonder that the city embraced the project wholeheartedly within days of the resolution.²³ The project seemed well on its way to becoming an internationally renowned monument.

The governor of New Mexico formed a commission to help develop and promote the Space Hall. It was named the "Governor's Interim International Space Hall of Fame Commission" and was tasked with several duties: first, to aid in the planning and developing for the Space Hall; second, to act as a legal liaison for the project by handling funds, land, and any other assets; third, to promote the project by giving presentations in front of state legislation; and, finally, to advise the governor in all matters concerning the Space Hall. The initial commission consisted of fourteen members, including prominent scientists John Stapp and Ernst Steinhoff as well as Dwight Ohlinger, the man who envisioned the Space Hall. The commission was made official on December 17, 1973.

It took three years for the project to be completed, but the members of the commission were all determined to achieve success and enthusiastically set out to make their collective dream a reality.²⁴

In the initial development of the Space Hall, New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico (UNM) both studied and projected the potential of its economic contributions for the state of New Mexico. NMSU assessed that "Alamogordo stands in an ideal place for the development of a Space Hall of Fame."²⁵ Its location—about 40 miles from the Lincoln National Forest with picnic and camping grounds, places to fish and hunt, and a ski resort, as well as the nearby White Sands National Monument—offered a prime spot for the Space Hall. The growing population and steadily increasing rate of tourists traveling through the area also offered potential advantages to locating the Space Hall in Alamogordo. UNM's survey came to similar results as that of New Mexico State University: "The Space Hall of Fame would probably complement rather than compete with the already existing tourist facilities."²⁶ Though both projections were only speculative, they predicted a positive outcome for Alamogordo and the potential for increased tourism revenue in the area.

Gathering material and information for exhibits began as early as January 1974. The decommissioned "Little Joe" rocket and other missiles no longer in use were scheduled to be sold by the Smithsonian. However, after hearing about the proposed Space Hall, the Smithsonian opted to donate the rocket to the aspiring museum.²⁷ The museum was collecting missiles in order to build "an Avenue of (Space) Missiles" leading up to the building as a testament to the achievements of the men honored inside and to further emphasize the impact of the missions into space many of them were involved in.²⁸ The search for artifacts received support from Harrison Schmitt, a New Mexican astronaut and scientist who was a crew member on Apollo 17. To date, he is one of the last men to have ever stepped foot on the moon.²⁹ Schmitt was elected as a U.S. Senator from New Mexico in 1976 and encouraged the Space Hall Committee to continue its connection and co-operation with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Smithsonian Administration.³⁰

Dedicating the Space Museum

On October 5, 1976, the International Space Hall of Fame was dedicated in a lavish ceremony that involved the entire city of Alamogordo, as well as many of the surrounding areas. The ceremony began with four F-4 Phantom jets from the 49th Tactical Fighter Wing at Holloman Air Force Base performing a flyover in the sky above the festivities. The band from Luke Air Force Base, located near Phoenix,

Arizona, then played the national anthem. Among several speakers from state legislative positions, U.S. Congressman Harold Runnels commended Ohlinger for his innovation and noted that the Space Hall's dedication also marked the anniversary of Robert H. Goddard's initial launch "of a liquid-fueled rocket," a major achievement for rocket research. As each of the first thirty-five inductees were announced, a model rocket was launched into the sky in honor of them and their accomplishments.³¹ Food and drinks were provided for the event through various organizations' concession stands, offering local churches, schools, and other non-profit organizations the opportunity to raise funds for their own needs while supporting the opening of the Space Hall.³²

New Mexico's governor and several prominent figures of the space industry directly participated in events during the dedication ceremony. Two years before the dedication ceremony, Governor Bruce King held the honor of setting off dynamite on the future grounds of the Space Hall.³³ Dr. John Stapp was entrusted with the transportation of a "moon rock," collected on a NASA lunar mission, which was displayed during the dedication ceremony of the Space Hall. The rock was transported from El Paso to Alamogordo by the renowned scientist.³⁴ The "moon tree," a two-foot American sycamore, was planted by astronaut Dr. Robert Allan Ridley Parker on the grounds of the Space Hall. The tree was nicknamed as such because it grew from a seed which traveled with the crew of the Apollo 14 mission and then was brought back to Earth when the astronauts safely returned. The Space Hall received one of the five seeds given to the state of New Mexico by NASA. The tree was planted as a memorial to the men and women who made the Apollo 14 lunar mission a reality, and as a symbol for space exploration past, present, and future.³⁵

The dedication of the International Space Hall of Fame was a city-wide event and all the public schools, the city hall, and the courthouse in Alamogordo were closed on the day of the celebration. A parade traveled up a nearby street in "one of the most spectacular parades ever to be staged in this section of the Southwest." The parade included forty floats from the Alamogordo community as well as surrounding cities both in New Mexico and neighboring states, likely including El Paso.³⁶ New Mexico State University's Pride marching band performed at the opening ceremony in Alamogordo and was given an award for presenting the best performance of the day. Other awards were also given out, such as the "best synchronized group...given to the Mescalero Apache Dancers" as well as the "best miscellaneous entry [that] went to the Belgian horses from Deming."³⁷ Men, women, and children from various cities, states, and countries participated in and enjoyed the dedication ceremony for the Space Hall. Such a large, comprehensive celebration displayed the potential for the Space Hall to gain international significance.



Figure 3. The Moon Rock on Display. Photo courtesy of the author.

The annual meeting of the International Academy of Astronautics coincided with the dedication ceremonies of the International Space Hall of Fame in Alamogordo. The meeting ran from October fourth through the ninth and featured lectures from several prominent figures in the space industry, including Steinhoff.³⁸ With the help of Stapp and Steinhoff, several “internationally recognized scientists and space experts [would] be invited” to participate in the IAA meeting as well as the dedication ceremony of the Space Hall.³⁹ The Academy helped to establish the Space Hall by providing nominees for the first induction ceremony, which took place during the dedication. Stapp and Steinhoff spoke to and secured the support of the organization’s leaders at the 1973 meeting in the Soviet Union, requesting the IAA’s participation in this selection.⁴⁰ The IAA is an important and prestigious organization in the space industry and it was an honor for such a small city to host an event for them.

Inductees into the International Space Hall of Fame were carefully selected. All nominees were evaluated for their research and other contributions to the space industry. According to Steinhoff, “it may be remarked that the Co-Chairmen of the IAA History Committee came

up with a list of about 100 potential space pioneers each, from which 72 were unanimous from a broad nation spectrum of the 28-nation Academy Membership.”⁴¹ The historians for the IAA discussed and decided which men (there were no women on the list) had the most valuable contributions in an objective and just way. The first inductees that were honored by the Space Hall in their dedication ceremony in 1976 were chosen for their “fundamental contributions to the advancement of Spaceflight.”⁴² Many others have since joined them; the International Space Hall of Fame, now housed inside the Space Hall, currently has 170 inductees, including women. Currently, the International Space Hall of Fame is displayed in its entirety on one of the museum’s four floors. Previously each member had their own plaque which detailed their contributions and discoveries and visitors could read about the honorees as they travelled from the fourth floor down to the first.⁴³ These persons were all chosen to be represented for their common “belief in, and influence on, the future of space exploration.” It has been said that it “is the presentation of their life stories” which makes the Space Hall such a valuable and awe-inspiring place to visit.⁴⁴

The Museum Today

In the museum’s present conception as the New Mexico Museum of Space History, the “Little Joe II” display still exists and the so-called space missile avenue has transformed into the John P. Stapp Air & Space Park. The “Little Joe II,” a model of rocket tested at the nearby White Sands Missile Range, remains on the premises alongside many other displays such as old rocket engines and missiles.⁴⁵ Stapp, the park’s namesake, played a vital role in the transfer of the Daisy Track to the Space Hall. The Daisy Track was utilized in Stapp’s tests on acceleration and deceleration at White Sands Missile Range. The track had been sitting in a warehouse leased to New Mexico State University when the former director of the Space Hall, Dr. Greg Kennedy, requested the track from the United States Air Force. New Mexico State University, the U.S. Air Force and the Space Hall all cooperated to eventually transfer the track to the museum.⁴⁶ A large section of the track now has an outdoor exhibit housed on the museum grounds, not far from its collection of rockets and missile parts.

Inside the museum, a moon rock is still on display for visitors to see. This is not, however, the same moon rock displayed during the dedication ceremony in 1976. The moon rock currently on display was secured with the help of Harrison Schmitt. He coordinated with NASA to arrange for a moon rock, from the Apollo 17 mission on which he flew, to be loaned indefinitely to the museum.⁴⁷ A pair of coveralls that Schmitt used during

training is also among the museum's abundant collection. Pieces of the German V-2 rockets and a fuel injector from one of the rockets which Robert Goddard tested are also featured exhibits.⁴⁸ The remains of HAM, the famous chimp sent into space, reside on the grounds of the museum in honor of the achievements made in New Mexico. Some believe that if one steps on the grave of HAM outside of the museum, his ghost will appear as the visitor travels in the museum's elevator.

The Space Hall continues to honor and preserve the technological advances of the space industry even today. In the recent past of the mid-1990s, White Sands Missile Range was involved in testing for VTOL, an acronym which stands for Vertical Takeoff and Landing. This technology, once fully developed, will allow for point-to-point landing in future space flight. An example of point-to-point landing would be a rocket launching from one city, going up into the sub-orbit, and then coming back down to land in another city across the globe within several hours. This testing will have significant impact on sub-orbital flight in the future. During the last of three tests with VTOL, a landing strut collapsed and caused the rocket to explode. The remnants of this rocket are now owned by the Space Hall.⁴⁹ Involved in the project was the Delta Clipper, built by aerospace company McDonnell Douglas, which is a space vehicle described as a "single-stage, vertical-takeoff and vertical-landing vehicle." It holds the promise of rockets someday being used in a way similar to a passenger airplane.⁵⁰

The Space Hall worked in cooperation with Spaceport America, a project created to explore commercial use spacecraft, located on the western border of White Sands Missile Range.⁵¹ This cooperation entailed that the Space Hall would receive any artifacts from Spaceport America in order to preserve and display them. In the early 2000s, after the catastrophe of the Delta Clipper exploding during landing, the museum was given two sections of the rocket involved in the mostly successful final test performed at White Sands Missile Range for preservation. The museum continues to house the artifacts received from the project and hopes to eventually create a full-fledged exhibit detailing the tests and their significance for the future of space travel.⁵² The artifacts are currently displayed alongside others inside the metal shed which houses the Daisy Track exhibit.

The Role of New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University, located in Las Cruces some seventy-plus miles from Alamogordo, played a valuable role in promoting space programs in the state. This role also included the development of and cooperation with the Space Hall. In 1961, Clyde Tombaugh became a

professor of Astronomy at the university.⁵³ The relatively close proximity of Las Cruces to Alamogordo allowed Tombaugh to support the Space Hall and continue his work in the space industry. John Stapp was never a professor, but he presented a guest lecture at NMSU's Corbett Center on a new project he was proposing. His plan, called Project Blue Sky, would provide a means of transportation from the Space Hall up to the nearest peak of the Sacramento Mountains. From the peak, visitors would be able to see across the basin, from the Franklin Mountains in El Paso, Texas approximately eighty-two miles away, to the Sandia Mountains in Albuquerque, New Mexico another 202 miles from Alamogordo.⁵⁴ Such a project would have potentially led to an increase of visitors, had it succeeded.

Without New Mexico State University's assistance in obtaining land, the Space Hall likely would have been a very different building. In early 1974, New Mexico State University's president, Gerald W. Thomas, notified Dwight Ohlinger of a motion that was carried by the Board of Regents for the school. Those on the board were presented with a proposal to provide land for the Space Hall by donating land owned by the university from the local community college branch at New Mexico State University-Alamogordo (NMSU-A). Not long after, the motion was approved, and forty-five acres of land was donated for development.⁵⁵ NMSU's willingness to donate a significant portion of land for the Space Hall demonstrates the wide-spread enthusiasm and support for the project. The university cooperated with the Governor's Interim Commission throughout its development to help the commission and the Space Hall achieve its goals.

The relationship between the Space Hall and New Mexico State University continued to be cultivated even after it was established. A program was introduced in 1982 designed to "introduce elementary school teachers and their students to the creative potentials of computer art."⁵⁶ The program was jointly operated by the Space Hall and NMSU. It provided a van, loaded with computers donated by Texas Instruments, which traveled around the local area schools to teach students and teachers alike. Its purpose was to "create a computer-based environment in which mathematics and other areas of learning can be taught through practical experience," with staff provided by NMSU.⁵⁷ NMSU's president, Gerald Thomas, hoped that the project would "encourage private industry to contribute to education." The program was hailed as a "significant and forward-looking step for Southern New Mexico" and was only one of the many contributions the Space Hall brought to its community.⁵⁸ A year later, an update on these programs held that they were met with success, an encouraging sign for both the Space Hall and NMSU.⁵⁹



Figure 4. The Daisy Track. This section of track was used by Col. John P. Stapp in his testing on the effects of acceleration and deceleration on humans. Photo courtesy of the author.

As a continued effort in cooperation, the Space Hall hosted the rocket club of NMSU, called The Spaceport Rocket Association, in 1986. The club met once a month at the Clyde W. Tombaugh Space Theater.⁶⁰ This was a planetarium added to the Space Hall's campus several years after the initial "Golden Cube" was built, established in 1980 as a part of the Clyde W. Tombaugh Space Instruction Center. NMSU-A worked with the Space Hall on the project and Dr. Gerald Thomas of NMSU said that it was "a 'monument to the co-operation of the International Space Hall of Fame, NMSU-A, and the state legislature."⁶¹ Regular model rocket launches were also hosted by the Space Hall for the club; members would gather and launch model rockets from the parking lot. A year later, the Space Hall invited the students of NMSU once more as they held a 3D film at the planetarium.⁶² Through these programs and events, NMSU and the Space Hall continued to foster the partnership created when land was donated by the university for the Space Hall.

Currently, New Mexico State University still cooperates with the Space Hall through various programs and annual celebrations. This is mostly done through the local branch, NMSU-A, as it continues to cooperate with the museum in various ways, such as the utilization of classrooms in the Tombaugh Space Instruction Center for Chemistry classes taught at the college. The Tombaugh Planetarium has also been used by NMSU-A for astronomy shows and lectures presented by the faculty. During summers, different students from the college often aided the Space Hall in their series of camps provided for school children of all ages. The program started in 1986 and today continues to educate and engage children from local schools as well as other places around the area such as Las Cruces, El Paso, and even from other locations throughout the United States.⁶³

The museum continues to cooperate with the local branch of NMSU and the city of Alamogordo by hosting the annual Fourth of July celebration.⁶⁴ The city utilizes the planetarium's parking lot to launch the fireworks they have provided for the annual public display. They also show their support through the community by offering free lectures at the museum presented by various individuals involved in the space industry. This lecture series began in 2001 with a presentation on telescopes by John W. Briggs, a researcher stationed in the nearby Sacramento Mountains at the National Solar Observatory in Sunspot.⁶⁵ Today this is still a routine occurrence, happening on every first Friday of the month. It is now called the "Launch Pad Lecture Series" and talks are given by either museum staff or guest speakers about numerous topics relating to space.⁶⁶

Keeping the Dream Alive

Despite the valuable support and relatively smooth development of the Space Hall, it has faced several challenges over the years. Funding—or rather lack thereof—has been the biggest challenge for the museum since its conception. The state legislature of New Mexico played a significant role in securing the initial funds for the building, but even with its endorsement issues abounded. The Governor's Commission submitted a bill asking for \$1.8 million in funds for the building of the Space Hall. In early 1974, it was announced that the bill had been passed in the New Mexico House of Representatives with a unanimous 12-0 vote.⁶⁷ After the approval, Governor Bruce King signed in the bill as emergency funds, allowing the money to be available right away.⁶⁸ Despite receiving this state funding, such a large project still required additional funds. The committee hoped to receive a much larger sum of more than \$7 million from federal funding through the \$55 million dollar budget for NASA, arranged by Senator Montoya.⁶⁹ However, the bill fell through after Senator Montoya struggled to be re-elected and the Space Hall's support from NASA failed.⁷⁰ This was a potentially major setback for the Space Hall, but the commission was dedicated to the cause and put their heads together to find a solution.

In an attempt to fill this void, the Alamogordo Chamber of Commerce campaigned throughout the community and managed to raise \$75,000 in support of the International Space Hall of Fame.⁷¹ The Alamogordo Committee of Fifty consisted of business owners and community members who were committed to promoting Alamogordo and preserving defense installations Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range operating out of the Chamber of Commerce.⁷² They donated \$2,000 to the Space Hall for any immediate costs the commission might face. In addition to the Committee of Fifty's contribution, the Motel Owners Association petitioned to allot \$20,000 from the Lodgers Taxes annually to support the Space Hall.⁷³ The community members and local businesses that contributed funds were appreciated in a banquet on May 5, 1974. During the banquet, hosted at a local junior high school, New Mexico State Senator Aubrey Dunn expressed his gratitude for the "scores of persons who have contributed time, effort, and money to bring the Hall of Fame to its present position."⁷⁴ Though the banquet was held in gratitude of all those involved in raising funds, the fight to build the Space Hall was far from over.

Although the International Space Hall of Fame achieved marginal success—and in some ways, it reached an international audience through their association with the IAA—it never got the international recognition it yearned for. This truly is an unfortunate fate for a museum whose

mission is still important and relevant, especially to the state of New Mexico. Space exploration continues today, and New Mexico remains an important part of that, especially in regard to Spaceport America. Despite its lack of international distinction, the New Mexico Museum of Space History continues to honor its original goal of commemoration and preservation of the achievements made in the space industry.

Increased tourist revenue for Alamogordo and the surrounding areas was one of the two major goals the Space Hall hoped to achieve. But the question remains: was tourism and revenue in New Mexico impacted by the establishment of the Space Hall? Around 1980 it was noted that the museum had “approximately 6,500 visitors per month...a total attendance figure of 300,000.” It also boasted a “20% increase in attendance and revenue for a consecutive period of 20 months,” the only place in New Mexico to have achieved such a feat due to a decrease in tourism throughout the country that year. Kirk noted that “During May of 1980, individuals or groups from Australia, Saudia Arabia [sic], Canada, France, Great Britain, and Switzerland all toured the Space Hall of Fame.”⁷⁵ Those honored by the International Space Hall of Fame were from various nationalities, therefore it was fitting that international visitors were drawn to the memorial.

Though the Space Hall started off with an impressive attendance, the novelty of the museum soon wore off. There has been a lack of sources available beginning around the 1990s, which suggests that perhaps the Space Hall’s success in bringing in tourists has since then declined. Current tourism revenue statistics are not readily available, making a fully realized argument about the museum’s present attendance difficult. However, comparing the abundance of information and newspaper articles available regarding its early years as the International Space Hall of Fame to the scant resources available about the New Mexico Museum of Space History is a statement unto itself. The end of an era came with the final landing of the Space Shuttle on July 21, 2011 at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.⁷⁶ Perhaps that contributed to the lack of interest in the New Mexico Museum of Space History outside of the realm of space enthusiasts. Despite this, the Space Hall continues to offer an abundance of rich history and interactive exhibits for all to enjoy.

For the Space Hall, the building itself was another challenge it encountered. As time went on the Space Hall evolved to encompass more than just the men and woman honored there. Its exhibits grew to encompass the history of space exploration and provide wider context of the space industry in New Mexico. Throughout the years it acquired many large and valuable artifacts which told the history of the space industry. Although they are valuable to the preservation of New Mexico’s legacy in the space industry, the possession of these artifacts became

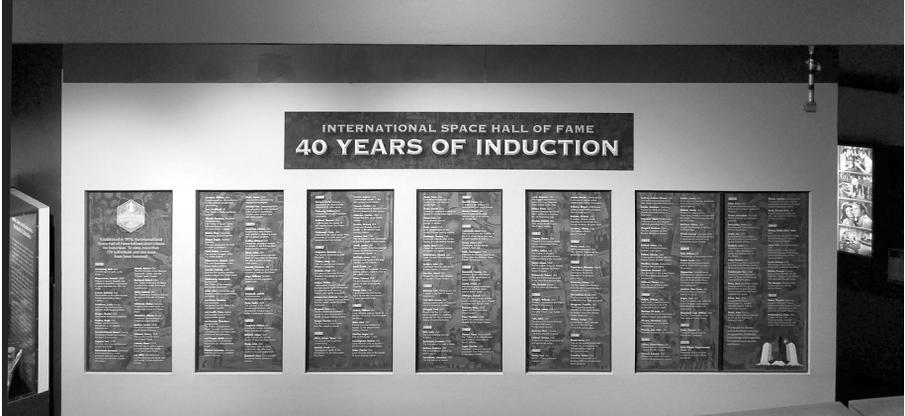


Figure 5. Plaques Honoring the Inductees into the International Space Hall of Fame. Photo courtesy of the author.

a problem because the Space Hall was a purpose-built building. And that purpose had been the display and commemoration of people who contributed to the space industry over the years, not the display of artifacts in exhibitions. Because of this, the museum does not have a freight elevator despite consisting of three stories and is therefore limited in terms of exhibitions.⁷⁷ The museum's design continues to be one of its biggest challenges, especially as it strives to expand its exhibits to draw in a wider audience as well as incorporate the new technologies being explored today in the space industry.

The Space Hall is situated in a state that has made hundreds of contributions to the space industry over the last eighty years. The community of Alamogordo and the surrounding areas worked tirelessly to establish the Space Hall in order to bring their city international recognition. Although that goal was never achieved, the museum continues to honor the history that was made in New Mexico and the individuals that were involved. The museum supports the community through its cooperation with NMSU-A and other events such as the annual Fourth of July celebration, a lecture series, and the summer camp hosted every year. Though it did not bring the high level of tourism revenue it was hoping for, the museum continues to honor the achievements made in the vast expanse of desert land surrounding the Alamogordo area and the people who commit their lives to the improvement of space exploration.

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2018 Hall of Honor

Dr. Maceo Dailey

2018 Hall of Honor Inductee

Maceo Crenshaw Dailey, Jr., historian, professor, publisher, and academic administrator, was born July 4, 1943 in Norfolk, Virginia. Dr. Dailey was the oldest of nine children, and the family moved to Baltimore, Maryland when he was six. While in Baltimore, elementary public school teacher Mary Carter Smith introduced him to African cultures based on her trips to the continent. He played basketball at Forest Park High (1958-1962), receiving first team All-Maryland Scholastic Association honors. Sandra L. Prettyman married Dr. Dailey in 1967 and their union produced five sons.

Dr. Dailey earned history degrees from both Towson (1967) and Morgan State (1971) universities, and completed his dissertation at Howard University entitled, “Emmett Jay Scott: The Career of a Secondary Black Leader”—a biography of the closest advisor to Booker T. Washington.

Dr. Dailey taught forty-five years at various institutions such as Towson High, Towson, Notre Dame of Maryland, Morgan State, SUNY-Brockport, Smith, Colby, Howard, Boston College, Brown, Spelman, NYU, Emory, Morehouse, and at UTEP as associate professor and the first director of the African American Studies Program.

Dr. Dailey co-edited and authored a number of books including, *Where-soever My People Chance to Dwell: Oral Interviews with African American Women of El Paso*, and *African Americans in El Paso*.

Dr. Dailey co-founded Sweet Earth Flying Press which produced books by women and people of color such as the overlooked 1930s text, *Boy of the Border* (2009), by Harlem Renaissance writers Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes that told the tale of a young boy’s Mexican Revolution-era experiences.

After a brief bout with cancer, Maceo Crenshaw Dailey, Jr. passed away at the age of 72 on October 11, 2015.



Telesforo Montes

2018 Hall of Honor Inductee

Telesforo Montes was born in San Elizario, Texas in 1820. He married Maria Quirina Alderete on December 3, 1840 at Nuestra Senora De Guadalupe, in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. They had twelve children who were all born in San Elizario, Texas.

Mr. Montes was elected Justice of the Peace in El Paso County, Precinct 4, on July 1, 1872 and commissioned as a Judge in El Paso County on September 5, 1872. Mr. Montes also served as mayor of San Elizario in 1884 and as president of the San Elizario Board of School Trustees.

In May 27, 1874, Mr. Montes was authorized to muster a Texas Rangers company in San Elizario. Most of the members were local, and Mr. Montes's Rangers were designated the Minutemen Company of the Frontier Battalion. When Mr. Montes was commissioned a Lieutenant in the Texas Rangers in 1874 he had 25 men at his command, including his two sons, Jesus and Severo. Also included in his command were his sons-in-law, Tomas Garcia and Carlos Garcia. "These men were commissioned to provide protection of the frontier of the state of Texas against the invasion of hostile Indians, Mexicans or other marauding or thieving parties," as noted on the orders dated April 10, 1874. Mr. Montes was promoted to the rank of Captain in the Texas Rangers in 1877.

Mr. Montes and Gregorio N. Garcia were instrumental in establishing the first Catholic school for girls, which is now Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas. The school's history highlights that "the idea was bold for its time. When Loretto Academy was founded by the Sisters of Loretto in San Elizario, Texas, in 1879, it was the first Catholic preparatory school for women in the Southwest. Here, young women could receive a rigorous and challenging education in a supportive environment." Mr. Montes's granddaughter Maria was the valedictorian of her graduating class at Loretto Academy in 1892. This was the last class to graduate from the Academy in San Elizario, taught by the Sisters of Loretto, before the Academy was moved to El Paso, Texas.



Pres Dehrkoop

2018 Hall of Honor Inductee

Pres Dehrkoop was born in Silver City, New Mexico, but has been proud to call El Paso her home for many years. She has been a driving force in the historic preservation community in El Paso, serving as chairperson on the boards of several organizations such as the Twelve Travelers, the El Paso County Historical Commission; as historian of the El Paso Group; and as president of the El Paso Alumnae Panhellenic, the Casa Magoffin Compañeros, and the El Paso Rose Society. Many El Pasoans also remember Pres as the kind and jovial bridal consultant who worked at Charolette's for many years.

Though Ms. Dehrkoop has contributed much to El Paso's historical preservation and culture, she may be best-known for her tireless efforts to promote the history of the Harvey Girls, the countless waitresses who worked at the Harvey House restaurants located within train depots throughout the United States in the early and mid-twentieth century. One of those very establishments existed in El Paso, a testament to the importance of railroads in this region's history. She, along with several others, have researched the history of the Harvey Girls and guided tourists and other curious individuals through its long and fascinating past.

A 1990 El Paso Herald-Post article states that "the phrase 'Many Irons in the Fire' could have been coined for Pres Dehrkoop" and called her "a charming, lively woman who thrives on her various ventures." She continues to support historic preservation in El Paso and is always willing to offer her assistance and expertise to people seeking to understand its history.

Mrs. Dehrkoop shares her life with her loving husband Bud, to whom she has been married for sixty years. She has two children and many more grandchildren.



Paul L. Foster

2018 Hall of Honor Inductee

Paul L. Foster is President of Franklin Mountain Management, LLC and founder and former Executive Chairman of Western Refining, Inc.

An avid supporter of the Borderplex Region (El Paso, TX/Juarez, MX/Las Cruces, NM), Mr. Foster is involved in numerous local and regional business, civic, and charitable organizations. In 2013, he was appointed to the El Paso branch board of the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank. Mr. Foster has also served as a Director of WestStar Bank in El Paso since 2004. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for Andeavor, Jordan Foster Construction, and Vomaris, Inc.



Mr. Foster is passionate about the city he calls home and is a catalyst in El Paso's downtown redevelopment and revitalization efforts. He has purchased a number of historic El Paso buildings and is establishing the Mills Plaza District in downtown El Paso through meticulous renovation and restoration of those structures, including the Mills Building and the Centre Building. His most recent project, the historic Plaza Hotel, is scheduled to open in 2019. In addition, Mr. Foster developed and built the St. Regis Parking Facility in downtown El Paso, and a 600,000 sq. ft. retail shopping and lifestyle complex near Interstate 10 in El Paso called The Fountains at Farah.

Mr. Foster has given generously to initiatives in Texas and the Borderplex region, including significant civic and charitable donations. His gifts include a \$50 million donation to create the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Foster donated \$500,000 to help fund La Mano Amiga, an operations facility for El Pasoans Fighting Hunger. Mr. and Mrs. Foster also gave \$2 million to the El Paso Zoo, to provide ongoing, year-long memberships for military families, as well as to fund the Foster Tree House Playground and support other zoo projects.

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