

Schmitt, Harrison Encyclopedia Article

Schmitt, Harrison

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Astronaut Harrison Schmitt was photographed in December, 1971, in front of the lunar globe he helped develop.

American Astronaut and Senator 1935-

Born in Santa Rita, New Mexico, on July 3, 1935, Harrison H. "Jack" Schmitt received a bachelor of science degree from the California Institute of Technology in 1957 and a doctorate in geology from Harvard University in 1964.

In June 1965, when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) selected Schmitt for its first group of scientist-astronauts, he was involved in mapping the Moon with the U.S. Geological Survey's Astrogeology Center at Flagstaff, Arizona. Schmitt provided Apollo flight crews with detailed instructions in lunar navigation, geology, and feature recognition while training for his Moon mission. Additionally, he helped achieve the inclusion of scientific activities into Apollo missions and helped analyze the lunar soil samples returned by the astronauts.

On December 10, 1972, Apollo 17 Mission Commander Eugene Cernan and Schmitt landed the moonship Challenger in a mountain-ringed valley named Taurus-Littrow. "It's a good geologist's paradise if I've ever seen one!" Schmitt said as he followed Cernan to the surface.

Schmitt resigned from NASA in 1975 to run for the U.S. Senate in New Mexico. In the last two years of his term he was chairman of the Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space. He teaches at the University of Wisconsin and is a business and technical consultant.

See Also

Apollo (Volume 3);; Apollo Lunar Landing Sites (Volume 3);; History of Humans in Space (Volume 3);; Lunar Rovers (Volume 3);

Bibliography

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Wilhelms, Don E. *To a Rocky Moon: A Geologist's History of Lunar Exploration*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993.

World Spaceflight News, ed. *On the Moon with Apollo 17*. Mount Laurel, NJ: Progressive Management, 2001.

Internet Resources

"Harrison Schmitt." U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame. <<http://www.astronauts.org/astronauts/schmitt.htm>>.