

Zubrin, Robert Encyclopedia Article

Zubrin, Robert

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Zubrin, Robert

American Aerospace Engineer 1952-

Robert Maynard Zubrin is an aerospace engineer credited for revolutionizing plans for the human exploration of Mars. After an early career as a teacher, Zubrin went to graduate school in the mid-1980s, earning a doctorate in nuclear engineering from the University of Washington.

As an engineer for the aerospace firm Martin Marietta (now Lockheed Martin) starting in the late 1980s, Zubrin worked on projects ranging from a nuclear rocket engine to a spaceplane. His best-known work at the company, however, was the development of "Mars Direct," a new architecture for human missions to Mars that would rely on the resources available on Mars to reduce their cost. Mars Direct attracted the attention of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which incorporated aspects of the proposal into its Mars mission plans.

Zubrin also coauthored a popular book about Mars Direct, *The Case for Mars* (1996). Zubrin used the success of the book as a springboard in 1998 for creating the Mars Society, a membership organization that promotes the human exploration of Mars. Zubrin serves as president of the society, which has supported a number of research projects designed to further technology needed for future Mars missions. Zubrin also founded Pioneer Astronautics, a small aerospace firm in Colorado he created after leaving Lockheed Martin in 1996.

See Also

Human Missions to Mars (Volume 3);; Mars (Volume 2);; Mars Bases (Volume 4);; Mars Direct (Volume 4).

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———. *First Landing*. New York: Ace Books, 2001.

Zubrin, Robert, with Richard Wagner. *The Case for Mars: The Plan to Settle the Red Planet and Why We Must*. New York: Free Press, 1996.

Internet Resources

"Dr. Robert Zubrin." *Pioneer Astronautics*. <<http://www.pioneerastro.com/Team/rzubrin.html>>.