



Alumni of Achievement

Daniel Dumbacher

M.A.S. '84

As a young man working at Marshall Space Flight Center, it didn't take long for Daniel "Dan" Dumbacher, an alumnus of The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) to realize he would need to further his education to advance his career.

"UAH provided an excellent option with the Administrative Science Degree (now MBA) to prepare for program management and leadership roles," Dumbacher said. "The MBA gave me the background and preparation for key management roles and particularly key lessons needed for the leadership roles I held. Without the UAH classes and graduate degree, career advancement would not have been possible."

A native of Indianapolis, IN, Dumbacher graduated from Huntsville High School after moving to North Alabama during his senior year. His UAH memories include Dr. Daniel Sherman as a key faculty member and his classes. "One of the more interesting memories was taking classes with my fiancé (now wife), and also taking classes with people who became lifelong friends at NASA."

Dumbacher is a Professor of Engineering Practice in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University (PU). He teaches courses in systems thinking, systems engineering, and space policy. Dumbacher is also helping establish the Purdue Systems Collaboratory to bring together the many perspectives and disciplines needed to address complex problems for today and the future, as well as prepare the next generation of practitioners, researchers, and leaders in systems thinking.

Prior to joining the faculty at PU, Dumbacher served as the Deputy Associate Administrator, Exploration Systems Development Division, for the Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters. In that capacity, he provided leadership and management as the Program Director for Exploration Systems Development encompassing the Space Launch System, Orion, and Ground Systems Development and Operations development and integration efforts. He led a team of over 5,000 people spanning all NASA Centers and Industry. He was responsible for a \$3 billion annual budget.

During his career, Dumbacher has received numerous awards and honors. In 2014, he was awarded the coveted Silver Snoopy Award, and the NASA Distinguished Service Medal. In 2007, he was awarded the Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious service. In 2003, Purdue University recognized him with the Outstanding Mechanical Engineer award. He received the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal in 2002 for accomplishments related to NASA's Space Launch Initiative Program, and in 1997 for his work on the DC-XA Project. In 1996, he was honored with a Marshall Director's Commendation for accomplishing two flight tests within 26 hours in the DC-XA Project flight test series.

"This is a great honor and tremendously appreciated," said Dumbacher. "The 2015 UAH Alumni of Achievement Award is recognition for the tremendous NASA team and all the great people that I have had the honor to work with over the years. Teamwork is the key to all of the great NASA accomplishments."

Dumbacher earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Purdue University in 1981.

