

Biographical for
Distinguished Alumni Award
Harry L. Atkins
Warren Wilson College
Class of 1956

Mr. Atkins graduated from Warren Wilson Junior College in 1956 with an Associate Arts Degree. From 1956 to 1958 he worked in a coal mine near his home town of Van, WV to earn funds to continue his education at Marshall University, Huntington, WV where he received a Bachelor's Degree in Physics and Math. While there he interviewed with the legendary German rocket scientist, Dr. Werner von Braun who became the Director of the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, in Huntsville, AL. In 1961 Mr. Atkins accepted a position working for the "von Braun Team" which developed and implemented the Apollo Program that landed Astronauts on the Moon. Mr. Atkins continued his education and received a Master of Science in physics from the University of Georgia with further work toward his Ph.D.

While at NASA he was assigned to increasingly important management positions for international science experiments in astronomy and material processing on orbiting space platforms; Skylab, Space Lab, Shuttle and International Space Station. In this position he was Technical Manager for experiments with France and Germany and Manager, International Science Investigator Team. For his efforts he was nominated by the French Government for the position of Astronaut for Payload Operations. He was later assigned as Special Assistant to the Associate Administrator for Commercial Programs, NASA HQ, Washington DC to develop and manage joint NASA and industry projects in applications research. He was given successive assignments as Senior Executive on Loan to the US Senate, Governor of Alabama and Governor of West Virginia to develop and manage advanced technology projects of mutual interest. He founded the Alabama Aerospace Industry Association and wrote the program plan for a NASA software center in West Virginia

Since retiring from NASA Mr. Atkins has worked for US and international companies and governments regarding advanced technology programs and economic development. He has managed projects to apply NASA and DOD technologies in coal mining search and rescue operation and hospital trauma centers in West Virginia. He developed and managed programs in education, culture, tourism and trade between industry and government agencies in the US, Romania, Turkey and Russia. Currently he is a Director, Technology Business Development for the Mayor, Huntsville, AL

Mr. Atkins has received many awards and commendations for his work at NASA and elsewhere.

Mr. Atkins is married to Joan Green Atkins who has a distinguished career in Human Resources, Department of Defense, National Security and NASA program management.