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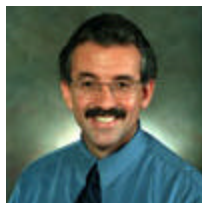
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For release: 11-04-04
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[Puerto Rico native Pedro Rodriguez named director of major engineering department at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center](#)



Pedro I. "Pete" Rodriguez, a native of Bayamon, Puerto Rico, has been named director of the Test Laboratory in the Engineering Directorate at Marshall Center. His appointment is part of a recent realignment intended to position the Marshall Center to better implement the Vision for Space Exploration. Rodriguez is responsible for engineering services and facilities for environmental, structural and propulsion testing of NASA programs assigned to the Marshall Center. Among his duties are research, development, qualification and acceptance testing of critical space and flight hardware, as well as the testing of relevant development hardware.

Photo: Rodriguez (NASA/MSFC)

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Pedro I. "Pete" Rodriguez, a native of Bayamon, Puerto Rico, has been named director of the Test Laboratory in the Engineering Directorate at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. His appointment is part of a recent realignment intended to position the Marshall Center to better implement the Vision for Space Exploration.

Rodriguez is responsible for engineering services and facilities for environmental, structural and propulsion testing of NASA programs assigned to the Marshall Center. Among his duties are research, development, qualification and acceptance testing of critical space and flight hardware, as well as the testing of relevant development hardware.

Rodriguez began his NASA career in 1976 as an engineer, designing special test equipment at the Marshall Center. Most recently he was deputy manager of the Structures, Mechanics and Thermal Department in the Engineering Directorate. Previous positions include chief of the Structural Development Branch and chief of the Structural Design Division, both in the Engineering Directorate. He was manager of NASA's Meteoroid and Orbital Debris Technology

Program and the lead systems engineer for the X-34 Experimental Launch Vehicle program. He also served as the leader of the Solid Rocket Booster accident investigation team following the Space Shuttle Columbia accident in February 2003 and was a project manager for the Space Launch Initiative program.

"We have some exciting work ahead of us as we strive to return the Space Shuttle to flight, keep the International Space Station flying and support the Vision for Space Exploration," Rodriguez said. The Vision for Space Exploration calls for a stepping-stone strategy of human and robotic missions to achieve new exploration goals, beginning with [returning the Space Shuttle safely to flight](#) and completing the International Space Station.

"I'm looking forward to these challenges as we move into the future," Rodriguez said. "Our goal is to provide the best NASA test facilities to support that effort."

Rodriguez graduated from Colegio De La Salle in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, in 1971. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez in 1976 and his master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Alabama in Huntsville in 1982. He earned his doctorate in civil engineering from the University of Mississippi in Oxford in 1997.

Rodriguez has authored 13 technical papers on a variety of topics ranging from engineering, structural design optimization, and space debris/micro-meteoroids to structures design with composite materials and viscoelastic analysis of solid propellants. He is a member of the American Institute of Astronautics and Aeronautics and the American Society of Civil Engineers.

He received NASA's Exceptional Service Medal, granted for significant sustained performance showing unusual initiative or creative ability that clearly demonstrates substantial improvements in NASA programs; the NASA Invention award for a portable, battery powered seat lift designed for people with degenerative knee arthritis to enable them to stand more easily; the Silver Snoopy Award, the Astronaut Corp's highest award for outstanding performance contributing to flight safety and mission success; and the Marshall Center Director's Commendation Award as the "Outstanding Hispanic Employee." The Puerto Rico State Senate also recognized Rodriguez with a resolution marking his engineering achievement.

He is the son of the late and internationally renowned musician and singer Pellin Rodriguez. His mother, Elba Lopez Perez, still resides in Bayamon. Rodriguez, who resides in Huntsville, is the father of a daughter, Marilyn, and son, Pedro Jr.

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