



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

ROBERT A. FROSCH

NASA Administrator, June 21, 1977-January 20, 1981



Dr. Robert A. Frosch was the fifth individual to perform as NASA administrator, serving throughout the administration of President Jimmy Carter. He was born on May 22, 1928, in New York City, New York. Educated in the public school system in the Bronx, Dr. Frosch earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in theoretical physics at Columbia University New York, located in New York City.

Between September 1951 and August 1963 he worked as a research scientist and director of research programs for Hudson Laboratories of Columbia University, Dobbs Ferry, New York, an organization under contract to the Office of Naval Research. Until 1953 he worked on problems in underwater sound, sonar, oceanography, marine geology, and marine geophysics. Thereafter, Dr. Frosch was first associate and then director of the laboratories, where he managed 300 employees, two ocean-going research vessels, and a \$3.5 million annual budget for fundamental research and engineering. During this period, was also Technical Director of Project ARTEMIS, a very large experimental active sonar system development.

In September 1963 Dr. Frosch came to Washington to work with the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), Department of Defense, serving as Director for Nuclear Test Detection (Project VELA), and then as deputy director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency, sharing responsibility for managing a \$270 million per year program of research and development. In July 1966 he became Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research and Development, responsible for all Navy programs of research, development, engineering, test and evaluation averaging \$2.5 billion annually. From January 1973 to July 1975 Dr. Frosch served as Assistant Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Program. With the rank of Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations, responsible for substantive global program activities of the United Nations system and other international activities related to environment matters.

While at NASA, Dr. Frosch was responsible for overseeing the continuation of the development effort on the Space Shuttle. During his tenure the project underwent testing of the first orbiter, *Enterprise*, at NASA's Dryden Flight Research Facility in southern California. The orbiter made its first free flight in the atmosphere on August 12, 1977.

Dr. Frosch left NASA with the change of administrations in January 1981 to become vice president for research at the General Motors Research Laboratories. He is still active in scientific and technical policy activities.

For further information email histinfo@hq.nasa.gov

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