

I Want to Be an Engineer

My name is Ron Dittmore, and I'm an engineer.



From an interview by Linda Davies

As a young boy, I knew I wanted to be involved with space travel and the great adventure of exploring the “final frontier.” Engineering was a good career to help me. I studied hard and took classes in math, science, and engineering. I also learned that listening, communicating, and public speaking were important too. These skills prepared me to work for the USA’s National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



What did you do in your job?

At first I was a space shuttle flight director. Later I became director of the space shuttle program. I planned the shuttle missions to space and managed the missions from launch through landing. I worked with hundreds of engineers, scientists, and astronauts to put the shuttle together and have a successful mission.

What did you like about your job?

Watching the giant space shuttle blast off from Kennedy Space Center was a thrill every time I saw it. With a rush of sounds that shook the ground, the space shuttle roared to life. In just eight minutes, the shuttle soared miles above the earth’s surface, traveling more than 25 times the speed of sound. I loved working with others to accomplish this goal together.

How did the gospel help you with your job?

My priesthood quorum and Boy Scout activities helped me develop leadership skills for my career. As I grew, the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ helped me as well. President Thomas S. Monson teaches, “When the time for decision arrives, the time for preparation is past.”* This simple idea helped prepare me for my life and for every space shuttle mission. In my job, I have been able to witness the majesty of the universe and God’s creations. ♦

* President Thomas S. Monson, “Dare to Stand Alone,” Ensign, Nov. 2011, 67.