



Guion S. Bluford, Ph.D.

Board Member, Aerospace Corporation
1991 Black Engineer of the Year



Guion S. "Guy" Bluford, Jr. is the first African American to fly in space. A veteran of four space flights, Bluford's name and face became famous all over the world as he helped in the deployment of a communications satellite for India on NASA Mission STS-8. While on STS-39, Discovery, Bluford helped in observations of the atmosphere and gas releases and assisted in deploying five satellites. In total, he logged 688 hours in space. He was educated at Philadelphia's Overbrook High School and then went on to earn a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from Pennsylvania State University. After finishing Penn State as a distinguished ROTC graduate in 1965, he began active service with flight training, logging 4,000 hours in jet planes. In 1972, Bluford entered the Air Force Institute of Technology residency program graduating with a master's degree in aerospace engineering in 1974. He continued his studies to complete a doctorate, also in aerospace engineering, and became a NASA astronaut in 1979. Bluford retired from the Air Force in 1993 and left NASA the same year. He continues to contribute to the advancement of space science.