

NASA CELEBRATES

AFRICAN-AMERICAN

HISTORY MONTH

AFRICAN-AMERICAN

CELEBRATES

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00:00:13,940 --> 00:00:17,840

Hello, I am Leland Melvin, NASA Associate Administrator for Education

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00:00:17,840 --> 00:00:20,650

and a two-time Space Shuttle astronaut.

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00:00:20,650 --> 00:00:23,700

Each February, our nation celebrates Black History Month.

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00:00:23,700 --> 00:00:27,150

It is a time to reflect and appreciate the many contributions

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00:00:27,150 --> 00:00:29,140

made by African Americans.

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At NASA, we naturally think first about those contributions

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00:00:32,990 --> 00:00:49,039

that relate to aeronautics

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00:00:49,039 --> 00:00:50,239

and space.

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00:00:50,239 --> 00:00:57,379

Like the trailblazing achievements of the Tuskegee Airmen – the first

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00:00:57,379 --> 00:01:01,640

African American military aviators in the United States armed forces.

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00:01:01,640 --> 00:01:05,820

They served during WWII – a time when racial

segregation was still

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00:01:05,820 --> 00:01:06,820

prevalent.

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00:01:06,820 --> 00:01:11,860

Or Guy Bluford, who in 1983 became the first African American to fly in

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00:01:11,860 --> 00:01:12,860

space.

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00:01:12,860 --> 00:01:15,750

He went on to fly three subsequent space shuttle missions

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00:01:15,750 --> 00:01:23,830

before retiring in 1993.

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00:01:23,830 --> 00:01:29,860

I was even fortunate enough to be part of a “first” – in 2009 on my

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00:01:29,860 --> 00:01:32,570

second shuttle mission aboard Atlantis.

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00:01:32,570 --> 00:01:37,570

Astronaut Bobby Satcher and I became the first two Black astronauts to fly

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00:01:37,570 --> 00:01:39,640

on the same mission.

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00:01:39,640 --> 00:01:43,590

All of these accomplishments instill a strong sense of pride in how far

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00:01:43,590 --> 00:01:48,260

African Americans have come and what many have had to overcome.

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00:01:48,260 --> 00:01:52,550

Remembering, reflecting, and honoring the past is important, but I also

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00:01:52,550 --> 00:01:56,300

want to challenge you to use Black History Month as a springboard to

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00:01:56,300 --> 00:01:57,300

the future.

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00:01:57,300 --> 00:02:00,730

We've all heard of the concept of 'paying it forward' – that is

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00:02:00,730 --> 00:02:02,510

a credo by which I live.

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00:02:02,510 --> 00:02:08,500

Ask yourself, "what can I do what can I do to help build on this incredible

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00:02:08,500 --> 00:02:10,700

legacy we celebrate?"

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00:02:10,700 --> 00:02:14,069

We all have inherent talents and gifts to share.

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00:02:14,069 --> 00:02:18,280

Let us do that now and give the next generation more examples of