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Aruban-born NASA Engineer and his team at the final mission

[Arubans in the News](#)  August 2nd, 2011

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Dr. Edward Cheung has spent his entire career as a robotics specialist with NASA, which also funded his scholarship to Yale University to obtain his PhD in Electrical Engineering. In 1990, a recruiter from NASA observed his doctorate dissertation, resulting in a summer job at Kennedy Space Center, and the start of his career with NASA, where for many years he was Principal Engineer of the Hubble Space Telescope Service Project. Since the last mission to Hubble in May 2009, Dr. Cheung and his team have focused their talents and expertise to a new project with Ed holding the position of Robotic Refueling Mission (RRM) Electrical Lead.

The RRM goal is to refuel communications and weather satellites while in orbit, and their experimental equipment went to the International Space Station with the last launching of the Atlantis on July 8. Ed was very much involved in this final mission, acting as a presenter in the “Tweet Tent”

on the day of the launch, when millions came to witness this last historic take off of a manned orbiter from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. “I was surrounded by people who had, for a large part of their lives, been part of the space shuttle program,” he recounts, “and afterwards, at Goddard and Marshall while following the final landing on July 21st. I had a moment, as I watched Atlantis climb, of amazement, and when it was all over, a feeling that if I could at that moment wave a magic wand allowing the shuttle program to continue, I would be a hero to the NASA people with me.”

The RRM project will be entirely controlled by Dr. Cheung and his team from the ground, and he recently returned to his home base of Goddard Space Center in Maryland from Marshall Space Center in Alabama which will be working in conjunction with the RRM team.

NASA has several ongoing projects for space exploration and the improvement of aeronautics, including ways to make aircraft safer and more environmentally responsible. Dr. Cheung’s project will double the life of satellites, which at present are sent to a “space junkyard” once they have expended the fuel tanks filled at launch. His team is also developing the robotics to effect repairs on satellites, which will save millions of dollars, as it will not require the launch of replacement equipment.

Though a number of Dr. Cheung’s colleagues have moved into the private sector, which may offer higher pay grades, he and his team feel the “esprit de corps” of being a part of NASA, often in the forefront of developing and advancing the technology for space exploration. He also commented he does not feel inclined to join the team of the James Webb Space Telescope project, his years with the HST have made him a confirmed “Hubble Hugger,” and being such an integral part of that groundbreaking project is something that he will always treasure.

Courtesy of The Morning News(Rosalie Klein, Reporter)



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