



## Hans Mark

### NASA Ames Hall of Fame

It was obvious from the very beginning of Hans Mark's tenure as Ames Director that he was a man who liked to shake things up. As the first director who came to Ames from outside rather than inside the Center's ranks, he brought a new perspective to Ames' mission and to the task of managing its work.

A distinguished physicist, Mark taught at MIT, the University of California and Stanford University, also doing extensive research at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. It was his extensive experience in working in and later administering nuclear research and engineering programs that served as a basis for the changes he instituted at Ames when he became Director in 1969. Chief among his innovations was the Ames "murder board": a ruthless, uncompromising (but fair!) board of individuals who grilled those proposing new projects or lines of research. The objective was not to denigrate or humiliate, but rather to toughen a proponent's skin and nerve for the tough presentation of their project to headquarters. Through this process, researchers could strengthen and hone the arguments and the scientific rationales they would use to convince those who would ultimately approve or reject their proposals.

Some of the older hands at Ames initially chafed at Mark's emphasis on project management and matrix organization techniques. Accustomed to working in their own areas of expertise at their own initiative, they were not conducive to being "managed" from above. Mark was sympathetic to such concerns and focused on creating an environment in which Ames researchers could flourish but also be aware of the bigger picture within NASA, so that they could take advantage of new opportunities which might arise outside of their narrow specialties. Although he adopted Harvey Allen's tradition of wandering around the center and poking into offices to keep abreast of his staff's work, Mark did not try to shield his people from the vagaries of NASA headquarters as did Allen, but rather sought to better harmonize Ames' goals with Washington's long-range objectives. He was a regular on the red-eye flight to D.C., attending endless meetings and tirelessly championing Ames and its unique expertise to NASA's hierarchy.

Mark also strove to forge new and valuable alliances between Ames and the outside community. He formed a cooperative agreement with California's Santa Clara University and other academic institutions which provided opportunities for Ames and university scientists to routinely collaborate, and which gave students the opportunity to complete their academic work at Ames. Mark strengthened Ames' interactions with private industry, making it easier for Ames staff to work with their corporate colleagues and to contract with companies who could help with Ames projects. Valuable ties with other governmental military and civilian agencies, including the Army and the FAA, are another legacy of Mark's directorship.

Dr. Mark did not neglect his own scientific work while at Ames. He continued his own research in aeronautics, including the use of advanced computational techniques to study aircraft and spacecraft flow fields, and was a major force behind the success of the incredible Pioneer space probes.

After leaving Ames in 1976, Dr. Mark continued to make vital contributions to America's aerospace effort, including service as Deputy Administrator of NASA and Secretary of the Air Force. But at Ames, he is best remembered for transforming the center into an institution with broadened influence and importance both within NASA and the aerospace community at large.