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Obituary

Charles A. Lundquist 1928–2017

The UAH M. Louis Salmon Library Team
and the IAA History Committee



**Dr. Charles Arthur “Chuck” Lundquist.
Credit: Charles A. Lundquist Collection,
The University of Alabama in Huntsville Archives and Special
Collections, Huntsville, Alabama, USA.**

Dr. Charles Arthur “Chuck” Lundquist was born on March 26, 1928, in Webster, South Dakota, USA, and passed away June 3, 2017, in Huntsville, Alabama, USA, at the age of eighty-nine.

In 1947, while attending South Dakota State University, Dr. Lundquist was exposed firsthand to the work of the Wernher von Braun rocket team at an annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Chicago, Illinois. Dr. Lundquist went on to receive a doctoral degree in physics from the University of Kansas in 1953, then began his academic career as an assistant professor of engineering research at Pennsylvania State University.

In 1954, he was drafted into the US Army, finding himself overseeing missile development while stationed at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. This is where Dr. Lundquist began in-depth assignments exploring orbit theory and tracking for Project Orbiter, as well as the first of many meetings with Wernher von Braun.

The next few years presented opportunities to meet several transplanted German rocket pioneers, developing close personal friendships and professional collaborations with many of them. The 1960s saw the rocket team personnel shift officially under the NASA umbrella as the Marshall Space Flight Center.

While Dr. Lundquist remained closely involved with space science research and development, he left Huntsville in 1962 to become the assistant director for science at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He remained an active member of the NASA Group for Lunar Exploration Planning, involved in the recommendations and research for various Apollo missions. In 1973, Dr. Lundquist returned to Huntsville to take up the mantle of director of the Space Sciences Laboratory for Marshall Space Flight Center, where he would interface more closely with many of his former friends and colleagues for the next eight years.

In 1981, he would officially retire from NASA and begin working for the University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) in a variety of research administration roles for the next two decades, retiring in 2000. This was hardly the end of his work, however. Dr. Lundquist would go on to devote a large portion of his time contributing to initiatives at the university's Research Institute as well as the M. Louis Salmon Library Archives.

His devotion to chronicling and preserving the written and oral histories of pioneering rocket scientists, engineers, and their staff has had a significant impact on many of the archival collections at UAH. Dr. Lundquist was a regular patron and active researcher in the library for many years, and his impact on the students and the faculty, as well as the greater Huntsville community, cannot be overstated.

He conducted dozens of interviews with scientists, engineers, and other important personnel connected to spaceflight as part of his Space History Interviews series. This included both American researchers and German researchers

who came to the United States as part of von Braun's team. These are vital to understanding the full history of the program, as they are some of the only recorded interviews of certain key figures.

This passion of documenting the full picture of Huntsville and the space program led to him writing and publishing a book, *Transplanted Rocket Pioneers*, the information from which one can read online. In *Transplanted Rocket Pioneers*, he fulfilled his goal to grant at least one page of history to each of the German rocket scientists and engineers who came to Huntsville in the 1950s and 1960s. He also was able to play a major role in the UAH celebration of the 100th year after von Braun's birth.

Charles Lundquist found, after his retirement from UAH, an additional platform for the publication of his historical research work at the annual History Symposium of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA). Starting in 2004, he presented, over several years, twelve papers on how to collect space history and a number of biographies on space pioneers, engineers, and scientists. His IAA History Symposium papers were published in the American Astronautical Society (AAS) History Series.

He became a member of the IAA History Committee and shared his experience in collecting, preserving, and presenting space historical biographies. He also, for many years, took an active part in the organization and conduct of the IAA History Symposia as session chair or rapporteur.

Charles Lundquist received the American Astronautical Society 2016 Ordway Award for Sustained Excellence in Spaceflight History, named in memory of human spaceflight advocate Frederick I. Ordway III (1927–2014).