

February Professional Lecture: NASA and the ‘Long’ Civil Rights Movement with NASA
Acting Chief Historian, Dr. Brian Odom

By Tracie Prater

Dr. Brian Odom, the acting NASA chief historian, spoke to AIAA GHS and other AIAA members in a virtual talk for Black History Month on February 24th. Dr. Odom is co-editor of *NASA and the Long Civil Rights Movement* (University Press of Florida, 2019), which was awarded the 2019 Eugene M. Emme Astronautical Literature Award by the American Astronautical Society (AAS). He is currently editing a collection of essays entitled *NASA and the American South*.

Dr. Odom’s talk focused on the intersection of the Apollo program and the civil rights movement in the 1960s, which created ripple effects across social, economic, and political boundaries. With much of the work for Apollo taking place in the segregated south, local communities were transformed by the huge financial investments associated with Kennedy’s Cold War goal of landing on the Moon. No location exemplifies that transformation more than Huntsville, Alabama. Dr. Odom discussed the ramifications of that transition in Huntsville by exploring the various responses from NASA Marshall, African Americans, HBCU presidents, and city leaders. The talk was recorded and can be viewed at [this link](#).

