

“Project Gemini – 51 Years and Counting”

Tom Benson

Retired Aerospace Engineer
NASA Glenn Research Center

In May, 1961, President Kennedy set the United States on a path to “landing a man on the Moon and return him safely to the Earth.” At that time, America’s total manned space experience was the 20 minute suborbital flight of Alan Shephard. To get to the Moon, Americans would have to learn how to a) live in space for more than a week, b) maneuver, rendezvous and dock two spacecraft in lunar orbit, c) develop the hardware and the expertise to exit the spacecraft and conduct spacewalks, and d) train a team of engineers and scientists who could execute the missions. These were the objectives of Project Gemini, which was conducted by NASA from 1964 to 1966. Tom Benson, recently retired from NASA, will describe the highlights of the Gemini program.