

EAGA Business Builder

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Today's guest speaker was Astronaut Mike Mullane



Richard M. "Mike" Mullane became an Albuquerque resident since he was 12 years old. The family home was near the 'desert' that, 60 years ago, was everything east of Wyoming and Candelaria. Ever since he was about 5 years old, Mr. Mullane knew that when he grew up he was going to be working with aviation, rocketry and/or something to do with space. That big uninhabited area so close to his home became a great 'lab' for young Mr. Mullane's rocket testing. Mike notes that his rocket manufacturing (described as pipe-bombs with fins), using his dad's car as a mock wind-tunnel device, and some amateur explosive material experiments confirm that "teen age boys are idiots". But he survived. As he got older, Mike continued progressing toward his dream. After High School he applied for admission to the US Air Force Academy, but was not accepted because his eyesight didn't meet the Academy's standards. So Mr. Mullane veered slightly on his forward trajectory and got a nomination to West Point (granted-he was the 3rd alternate, but he got in). Mike says that attending West Point was a huge positive in his life. Prior to that, he didn't believe in himself. He always had the feelings of "I can't; "I'll fail"; "it's too hard". West Point pushed his limits and helped build his confidence, character and abilities. After West Point, Mike served as an RF-4C Weapons System Officer, completing 134 combat missions in Viet Nam. The missions were via unarmed reconnaissance aircraft often flying so low they could see their own shadow on the ground below. In 1976 he completed the USAF Flight Test Engineer Course and was assigned as a flight test weapon systems officer at Eglin Air Force Base. The military career was rewarding, but Mr. Mullane still had an eye on his childhood plan. He had worked to earn a Master of Science degree in aeronautical engineering in 1975 so was in a great position when NASA started their Shuttle program and began accepting applications for non-pilot personnel. Astronaut Mike Mullane was one of the 35 member class in 1979 and subsequently flew as a Mission Specialist on 3 shuttle flights. One mission was to deploy satellites and run various tests. The other two flights were secret military missions that Mike was not able to discuss. In this morning's presentation, Mr. Mullane gave us an incredible amount of interesting information via videos, photos and comments about his personal experiences and about the NASA space programs. He included a lot of 'behind the scenes' information and some valuable 'lessons learned' data. There is not enough room here to properly discuss everything, so the following notes give just a few of the more important points. Mr. Mullane wanted to emphasize that everyone should be curious and questioning. Learn to learn about things. It is also important to remember that no matter the profession or one's position in that profession, everyone's perception counts. "Predictable surprises" should never happen. If you have an appropriate suggestion for resolving a problem, or avoiding a dangerous situation, be sure to speak up. "That's the way we've always done it" is not good logic when making a decision. Tell your team when you have positive input for a discussion. Mike notes that one person with courage can form a majority. There are instances when the NASA program could have benefited from the 'all opinions should be considered' attitude or had there been a desire to capitalize on things learned (or should have been learned) from prior near misses. The Challenger disaster may have been avoided if the opinion of 'secondary' maintenance staff had been included in the prelaunch discussion regarding what affect unexpected icy conditions could have on the fuel tank's rubber O-rings. And the Columbia disaster (caused by a 1.5 pound piece of foam coming off during launch and hitting a vulnerable heat shield component) may not have happened if someone had given extensive "what else?" thought when reviewing prior instances of something falling off and damaging parts of the shuttles. [Mike's second flight went into orbit with a damaged 5" thick heat shield and the return trip was within a few seconds of a catastrophic 'burn through' at the compromised part.] Mr. Mullane's presentation included a lot more details and 'insider knowledge' regarding the space program's past adventures and you missed a lot if you were not there to hear it. Mike also noted some personal encounters that resulted from his astronaut endeavors. He has had the envious experience of a photo-op with Christy Brinkley; he was able to fulfill an old Mouseketeer's dream when he had dinner with Annette Funicello (and his wife and her husband); and 'Tarzan' Mullane fulfilled a lot of men's dreams by being on an island with Bo Derek (though the island wasn't abandoned, and she was with her husband at the time). We all thank Mr. Mullane for taking the time to talk to our group. It was a very fun, informative and interesting time. If you would like to know more about Mr. Mullane and his experiences you can visit his website mikemulane.com and you can search other sources to find details about the NASA flights where Mr. Mullane was a crewmember. (Flights: Discovery mission STS-41D; Atlantis missions STS-27 and STS-36). And don't forget: Always do your best—it does matter; set lofty goals; fail fast and learn faster; be tenacious; and be confident. [BTW: Mike does believe that there is intelligent life somewhere out there in the universe. After all, it is estimated that there are 10,000 stars for every grain of sand on earth so odds are that one of the stars is home to intelligent life. They just haven't visited here yet.]

- ◆ Not getting political, but.... It is election time again. We will be voting on 3 new board members at our December 10th meeting. If you are interested in running for one of the available positions, or if you would like to nominate another member, please contact Elections Committee Chairman Paul Losey (pal@covenantschools.com) as soon as possible.
- ◆ The EAGA Christmas Holiday Party will be on December 7th at Hotel Albuquerque. Signup sheets will be available at our Tuesday morning breakfasts and additional data will be provided as we get closer to the event.
- ◆ A communications reminder:the email address 'eaga_members@eaganm.com' does not send to all members. It is fictitious address used to fill the "To:" box of general emails. Any time that you reply to one of those messages (even via "Reply All:") your correspondence will not go to the membership. Your should address any email directly to the intended recipient(s).

Badge Board Greeters

Nov 5 th	Glenn Felty—SunState Solar
Nov 12 th	Robert Schuerman—Medical & Commercial Communications
Nov 19 th	
Nov 26 th	No Meeting—Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 3 rd	Tim Stewart– Impact Nations
Dec 10 th	Glenn Felty—SunState Solar
Dec 17 th	
Dec 24 th	No meeting because of the Christmas Holiday
Dec 31 st	No meeting because of the New Year Holiday
Jan 7 th	
Jan 15 th	

Scheduled Speakers

Nov 5 th	Rich Ringrose—Albuquerque City Lifestyle Magazine
Nov 12 th	No scheduled speaker—Open Discussion
Nov 19 th	Michael Kourcek—Atmosphere Commercial Interiors
Nov 26 th	No Meeting—Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec 3 rd	Jack Thompson—Legacy Mortgage powered by Guild
Dec 10 th	John Rockwell—RLX, LLC
Dec 17 th	Robert Schuerman—Medical & Commercial Communications
Dec 24 th	No meeting because of the Christmas Holiday
Dec 31 st	No meeting because of the New Year Holiday
Jan 7 th	Nestor Romero– The Payroll Company
Jan 15 th	Glenn Felty—SunState Solar

EAGA Contact information for Executive Director: Mario Hernandez
Phone: 505-239-0259 email: eagaed@gmail.com
8100 Wyoming Blvd NE; Suite M4 #345 Albuquerque, NM 87113