

NOAA Leadership

Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan



Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan, NOAA Administrator and Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

Dr. Kathryn Sullivan was confirmed by the Senate as the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA Administrator on March 6, 2014, having served as Acting NOAA Administrator since February 28, 2013. She is a distinguished scientist, renowned astronaut and intrepid explorer.

Prior to her appointment as Acting Administrator, Dr. Sullivan held the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction and Deputy Administrator, and also performed the duties of NOAA's Chief Scientist, a vacant position. As Assistant Secretary, Dr. Sullivan played a central role in directing Administration and NOAA priority work in the areas of weather and water services, climate science and services, integrated mapping services and Earth-observing capabilities. She also provided agency-wide direction with regard to satellites, space weather, water, and ocean observations and forecasts to best serve American communities and businesses. As Deputy Administrator, she oversaw the smooth operation of the agency.

Dr. Sullivan is the United States Co-chair of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), an intergovernmental body that is building a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) to provide environmental intelligence relevant to societal needs.

Dr. Sullivan's impressive expertise spans the frontiers of space and sea. An accomplished oceanographer, she was appointed NOAA's Chief Scientist in 1993, where she oversaw a research and technology portfolio that included fisheries biology, climate change, satellite instrumentation and marine biodiversity.

She was the inaugural Director of the Battelle Center for Mathematics and Science Education Policy in the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at Ohio State University. Prior to joining Ohio

State, she served a decade as President and CEO of the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus, Ohio, one of the nation's leading science museums. Dr. Sullivan joined COSI after three years of service as Chief Scientist.

Dr. Sullivan was one of the first six women selected to join the NASA astronaut corps in 1978 and holds the distinction of being the first American woman to walk in space. She flew on three shuttle missions during her 15-year tenure, including the mission that deployed the Hubble Space Telescope. Dr. Sullivan has also served on the National Science Board (2004-2010) and as an oceanographer in the U.S. Navy Reserve (1988-2006). She holds a bachelor's degree in earth sciences from the University of California at Santa Cruz and a doctorate in geology from Dalhousie University in Canada.