

Dr. Charles Elachi, Director of JPL



Charles Elachi was appointed Director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in May, 2001.

Dr. Elachi is also Vice President of the California Institute of Technology. He received the Bachelor of Science (1968) in Physics from University of Grenoble, France, the Diplôme-Ingénieur (1968) in Engineering from the Polytechnic Institute, Grenoble and the Master of Science (1969) and Ph.D. (1971) degrees in electrical sciences from the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena. He also has a Master of Science degree (1983) in Geology from the University of California, Los Angeles and a Master of Business Administration (1979) from the University of Southern California. He joined JPL in 1970 and is a Professor of Electrical Engineering and Planetary Science at Caltech.

He has been a principal investigator on a number of research and development studies and flight projects sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). These include the Shuttle Imaging Radar series (Science Team Leader), the Magellan Imaging Radar (Team Member) and the Cassini Titan Radar (Team Leader). He is the author of over 230 publications in the fields of active microwave remote sensing and electromagnetic theory, and he holds several patents in those fields. He taught "physics of remote sensing" at the California Institute of Technology from 1982 to 2001.

As the Director for Space and Earth Science Programs at JPL from 1982 to 2000, he was responsible for the development of numerous flight missions and instruments for Earth observation, planetary exploration and astrophysics.

In 1988 the Los Angeles Times selected him as one of "Southern California's rising stars who will make a difference in L.A." In 1989, Asteroid 1982 SU was renamed 4116 Elachi in recognition of his contribution to planetary exploration.

In 1989 Dr. Elachi was elected to the National Academy of Engineering and has served on a number of academy committees.

In 2006 he was selected as one of America's Best Leaders by U.S. News & World Report and the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

He has chaired a number of strategic planning committees for NASA. He has lectured in more than 20 countries about space exploration and Earth observation. He participated in a number of archeological expeditions in Egypt, Oman and China.

He is a member of the Commission on DOE National Laboratories, a member of the Visiting Committee for the Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics at MIT, the past chair and current member of the UCLA Sciences Board of Visitors, a past member of the Huntington Hospital Board of Trustees in Pasadena, the past chair and member of the Lebanese American University Board of Trustees New York and Beirut, a member of the International Advisory Board of King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (KFUPM) in Saudi Arabia, and a member of the International Advisory Council of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) in Saudi Arabia. He was a member of the University of Arizona Engineering School Advisory Committee and the Boston University Center of Remote Sensing Advisory Council.

Dr. Elachi has received numerous awards, including an American University of Beirut Honorary Doctorate (2013), the Association of Space Explorers (ASE) Congress Crystal Helmet Award (2012), the Pasadena Arts Council Inaugural AxS (Arts & Sciences) Award (2012), the Lebanese American University Honorary Doctorate (2012), the National Academy of Engineering Arthur M. Bueche Award (2011), "Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur, France" (2011), Space Foundation J.E. Hill Lifetime Space Achievement Award (2011), AIAA Carl Sagan Award (2011), Occidental College honorary Doctor of Science degree (2011), Sigma Xi William Procter Prize for Scientific Achievement (2008), International von Karman Wings Award (2007), the Royal Society of London Massey Award (2006), the Lebanon Order of Cedars (2006 and 2012), the Philip Habib Award for Distinguished Public Service (2006), the American Astronautical Society Space Flight Award (2005), Bob Hope Distinguished Citizen Award (2005), NASA Exceptional Service Medal (2005), NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal (2004, 2002, 1994), the Takeda Award (2002), the Wernher Von Braun Award (2002), Dryden Award (2000), the NASA Distinguished Service Medal (1999), the COSPAR Nordberg Medal (1996), the Nevada Medal (1995), the IEEE Medal of Engineering Excellence (1992), the IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Distinguished Achievement Award (1987), the W.T. Pecora Award (1985), the NASA Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal (1982) and the ASP Autometric Award (1980 and 1982). He is a fellow of the IEEE and AIAA and a member of the National Academy of Engineering and the International Academy of Astronautics.