

# **OSU/NASA Education Projects: Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) Archive**

**Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma**

**Reflections of AESP from 1985-2001 by William O. Robertson. Written 2001.**

REFLECTIONS OF AESP FROM 1985-2001

By William O. Robertson

My association with the Aerospace Education Services Program and Oklahoma State University began on February 2, 1985. AESP Director, Dr. Ken Wiggins and MSFC Education Officer, Bill Anderson, interviewed me for a position as an education specialist for the Marshall Space Flight Center.

Through the years, AESP along with its team partners, the Urban-Rural Community Enrichment Program (URCEP) and the Teaching From Space program (TFSP) has evolved to meet the education needs of America.

When I started, AESP was known as "Spacemobile." This moniker was misleading to some. Many schools assumed that Spacemobile was a walk-through space exhibit on wheels. Of course, this was not the case. When I started with AESP, the program emphasized school assemblies where NASA education specialists would present an overview of NASA. The arrangement included setting up various scale models of spacecrafts and aircraft on tables, usually on a stage, and explaining to school kids the wonders of space and aeronautics. To emphasize the NASA mission, audiovisuals were used mainly in the format of 35mm slides, videotapes, and laser disc. These would be shown during the assembly or later in the school day visiting classrooms.

Starting in the early 1990's, NASA Headquarters and Oklahoma State University began to address how AESP could more effectively be a conduit for educational reform. One reason why AESP changed formats from the school assembly programs to teacher workshops and systemic outreach was because the old "Spacemobile" assembly program was no longer making the educational impact that it once had. The "static" Spacemobile program could no longer effectively compete for the attention of students that were raised on interactive media. It was also the concern of school administrators that taking time for assemblies was cutting into instructional hours that were being mandated by the state.

AESP, URCEP, and TFSP have changed to overcome these obstacles and in the process placed itself to be in the forefront of educational reform by emphasizing teacher training in utilizing aerospace education while modeling standards-based and inquiry teaching methods. Today, AESP is a program through which teachers are trained to use NASA educational materials to enhance teaching, ultimately imparting knowledge of NASA to students.