GEORGE D. NELSON

Biographical Sketch

Dr. George D. Nelson is emeritus Director of Science Mathematics, and Technology Education and Full Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Western Washington University. From1996-2001 he served as the Director of Project 2061 and senior staff at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and from 1989-2006 as Associate Vice Provost for Research and Associate Professor of Astronomy at the University of Washington. From 1978 to 1989 he was a NASA Astronaut and flew as a Mission Specialist on three Space Shuttle missions. During these missions, he performed an untethered spacewalk, the first on-orbit satellite repair, and was part of the crew of the first mission following the loss of the Space Shuttle Challenger. His current research is focused on education reform and the preparation of mathematics and science teachers. He has received many honors and awards including the NASA Medal for Exceptional Engineering Achievement and the Faculty Outstanding Service Award from Western Washington University. He is an elected member of the Washington State Academy of Sciences, an elected Fellow of the AAAS, and was inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2009. He earned his B.S. in physics from Harvey Mudd College and M.S. and Ph.D. in astronomy from the University of Washington. He lives in Bellingham, Washington with his wife, Susie.

Pinky Nelson's Personal Info:
Born in Charles City, Iowa
Grew up in Galesburg, Illinois and Willmar, Minnesota
Married Susie in 1971 while at Harvey Mudd College
Two daughters, Aimee – 1972, and Marti – 1975
Three grandsons, Pierce, 23, Langston, 21, and Andrew, 17
Hobbies include playing guitar (He was a founding member, with Hoot Gibson of the astronaut band Max Q), biking (He has ridden across the U.S. twice in 2000 and 2015), reading (keeping up on astronomy and physics, and way too much politics), and being outdoors (Every summer, he hikes a section of the Pacific Crest Trail. He and Susie are trying to visit all of the U.S National Parks.)