

Richard Ormsby

Richard Ormsby grew up in Coeur d'Alene, graduated from Coeur d'Alene High School and then transferred to the University of Idaho from North Idaho Junior College in 1952. He earned his electrical engineering degree from U of I in 1956, and that same year, married Marie Ingebritsen. The couple raised four children.

Upon graduation from U of I, Ormsby was immediately hired by the Western Electric Co. His first years there were spent in Boston studying computers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and writing test specifications for the SAGE radar subsystem – the first automated air defense program in the world. During the next few years, he continued working with additional SAGE programs and was promoted to Engineer. He was transferred to New York where he attended the Western Electric Co. Graduate engineering school.

In January 1962, Ormsby joined the then-fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration. His 30-plus career at NASA spanned some of the most exciting years in space science and exploration.

He initially was hired to provide technical management for the design, implementation and verification of the group system for the Nimbus Spacecraft program, an experimental weather satellite that provided the first weather information for the entire planet and made it possible to accurately map Earth. That project also provided the first global positioning hardware and capability.

Ormsby later served as one of the mission operations managers for NASA's Solar Maximum Mission, which provided the first observation of the origin of solar flares. His final project at NASA was one of the largest undertakings in the organization's history – the Hubble Space Telescope, which provided views 10 times better than any ground-based telescopes.

He retired in January 1992.

For leadership and contributions to pioneering space exploration, the University of Idaho Alumni Association proudly inducts Richard Ormsby into the Alumni Hall of Fame.