



New Fellow Spotlight: Renee Wynn

Retired Chief Information Officer

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

Renee P. Wynn recently retired as the NASA Chief Information Officer. Wynn joined NASA in July 2015 as Deputy Chief Information Officer and became the Chief Information Officer in September 2015. She came to NASA from the Environmental Protection Agency where she had served as the Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Environmental Information and Chief Information Officer since July 2013. Ms. Wynn had 30 years of federal service and 25 of those years were with EPA. Ms. Wynn had worked in the federal CIO world since 2011 and has been able to bring her experience working on environmental policy, budget formulation and analysis plus program management to her role as CIO.

Ms. Wynn holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from DePauw University, Indiana.

What are you most looking forward to as a NAPA Fellow?

This may sound trite but I'm excited about continuing to serve the US federal government in a different capacity. I've had an amazing career to continue to serve just seems natural.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do?

I loved serving the mission through operations. Oddly, I love operations. So being able to find ways forward to have IT enable the mission or mission support gave me satisfaction. Although I'm sure the missions and mission support functions didn't always see the cybersecurity measures as "helpful."

Who or what inspired you to work in public service?

When I went to college, I vowed to never work for the federal government. My father worked for NASA and my mother worked for NSA, covert. I saw how hard they worked and at times, seemed thankless. Also, as a kid, I struggled with how to describe their work. My dad helps make satellites and my mother was simply an "analyst." What's that to another kid on the playground?! So, off to school I went, determined. I was introduced to EPA's mission when I worked for Booz Allen and fell in love – what's not to love – clean air, clean water, clean land and safe chemicals. So, five years after graduation, I was a federal employee. Thirty years later I walked out the door during the pandemic so satisfied by what I got to do and who I got to serve. Wouldn't change a thing!

Which of the Academy's Grand Challenges resonate most with you?

For me, collaborating with people just as passionate about good government to solve the challenges will be satisfying. Well, managing technological challenges is what I spent the last 9 years doing so I'm excited for this area and of course, 25 years at EPA makes the environmental sustainability another winner in my book.

What advice can you give to folks beginning careers in public service?

Enjoy?! For anyone, make the most of the opportunity. Know your Agencies mission – all of it! You'll be amazed at how what you do contributes beginning on day one – if you understand the mission. Find a mentor, spread your wings and soar!

What has inspired you during challenging times?

I fortunately only had a few times that I considered challenging. When I encountered those moments, I usually went for a run to identify the frustration or just relieve the stress. By the end, I was back in the game. During these runs, I would think of those that serve in the military or those that lost their lives serving our country in a different way, such as covert operations, and then, my issue seemed inconsequential. So, a little less stress would always illuminate a path forward.

What is the first concert you attended?

I'm a parrot head so Jimmy Buffet was the first concert I saw!