Kei h A. Comea joined NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in 2006 to lead Curiosity's entry, descent and landing validation e□ort. As Curiosity's design neared completion and construction began, Keith transitioned to the assembly, integration and test team as the deputy systems manager. There he was responsible for leading the Curiosity's system test activities during its construction and test at JPL, as well as during the launch campaign at Cape Canaveral in November 2011.

Following the launch, Keith served as the cruise engineering operations team chief. In this role, he led the engineering team responsible for operating Curiosity during its eight and a half month cruise and approach to Mars, culminating with its landing on the night of Aug. 5, 2012, with Keith serving as □ight director. After landing, he was one of several tactical mission managers responsible for the initial commissioning and operation of Curiosity as it began its journey of discovery on the Martian surface. Keith received NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medal and several group achievement awards for his contributions to the success of Curiosity's mission.

Keith was most recently the deputy integration & test manager for JPL's SMAP (Soil

REFLECTIONS OF KEITH A. COMEAUX, PHD

When I look back on my youth, education and career, the common thread evident throughout is my curiosity. As a child, I was fascinated with all manner of aircraft, rockets, and spaceships. I was a bit young to remember the moon landings themselves, but I do remember pretending that my little red wagon was a space capsule. On Saturday evenings when my parents were away at Tiger Stadium, my grandfather would pull me in my capsule from the back door of the house around to the front stoop to watch the street lights come on and the stars come out. My grandmother would tell me that I'd grow up to live on the moon one day.

As Apollo waned and the Space Shuttle program delayed during the seventies, my attention turned to airplanes. I was enthralled by TV shows and movies that depicted daring planes. I was en es, but I do rar10.o4Au eollxplET0x4S g00.5(and)0/MCIDtd68cBT/T1d18(T)12(igy e0td64)1 TC /MCIDtd68Blan Shee /MCID 166 BDC BT/T11 17Tf0.391 Tw 10.5 0 0 10.5 8(, but I do r

I found myself interviewing with Hughes Aircraft, which no longer actually built aircraft but rather satellites in the Los Angeles area. It seemed interesting, but I knew very little about building satellites. When I visited the facility for a second interview, I learned that four of its employees had been selected to train as NASA payload specialists and one of them was on my interview schedule. He informed me about a new satellite under development that would employ ion propulsion, the stu of science ction. When I saw the various satellites under construction in the factory, I was hooked. I jumped in with both feet and drew upon the foundational knowledge that I had gained at LSU. It was di cult shifting gears, but I eventually got my bearings. Four years later we were ying the world's largest, most powerful telecommunications satellites, using ion propulsion to do it, and selling new satellites to the likes of DirecTV, XM Radio and the Air Force. And I even found my wife