

March 2009

LINDA BILLINGS, PH.D.

Communication Research

[libillin@starpower.net](mailto:libillin@starpower.net)

ph. 202-479-4311

Linda Billings is (soon to be...) a research professor at the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. She does communication research for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA's) Astrobiology Program in the Science Mission Directorate. She also advises NASA's Mars Exploration Program and Planetary Protection Office on communications.

Dr. Billings is responsible for reviewing, assessing, and coordinating communications, education, and public outreach activities sponsored by the Astrobiology Program.

From January 2007 through February 2009, Dr. Billings served as manager of communications for the NASA Astrobiology Program, under an Intergovernmental Personnel Act agreement with the SETI Institute of Mountain View, CA. From September 2002 through December 2006, Dr. Billings conducted science and risk communication research for NASA's Planetary Protection Office. From September 1999 through August 2002, she was Director of Communications for SPACEHAB Inc., (Now Astrotech) a builder of space habitats. In that capacity, she was responsible for media, public, and investor relations for the company.

Dr. Billings has worked for more than 30 years in Washington, D.C., as a researcher, journalist, freelance writer, communication specialist and consultant to the government. As a researcher, she has worked on communication strategy, risk communication, and audience studies for NASA's astrobiology, Mars exploration, and planetary protection program. As a corporate communications director, she was responsible for communications with the media, the public and the financial community. As a journalist, she covered energy, environment, labor relations, and aerospace, primarily for the trade press. She was the founding editor of Space Business News (1983-5) and the first senior editor for space at Air & Space/Smithsonian magazine (1985-8). She also was a contributing author for First Contact: The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (New American Library, 1990). Dr. Billings was a member of the staff for the National Commission on Space (1985-86). For the National Science Foundation and NASA, she has worked as a policy analyst, communications

specialist, education and outreach planner, and writer and editor. Her freelance articles have been published in outlets such as the Chicago Tribune (“Space station is good for more than star-gazing,” October 8, 1998), Washington Post Magazine (“Realtime: Pre-Life Sciences,” August 11, 1996) and Space News (“Aim for Exploration, Not Exploitation,” October 14-20, 1996).

Dr. Billings’ expertise is in mass communication, science communication, risk communication, rhetorical analysis, journalism studies, and social studies of science. Her research has focused on the role that journalists play in constructing the cultural authority of scientists and the rhetorical strategies that scientists and journalists employ in communicating about science. She earned her B.A. in social sciences from the State University of New York at Binghamton, her M.A. in international transactions from George Mason University, and her Ph.D. in mass communication from Indiana University’s School of Journalism. Her recent publications include: “Ideology, advocacy, and space flight – evolution of a cultural narrative,” Proceedings, “Societal Impact of Space Flight, September 19-21, 2006, Washington, DC: NASA History Office (in press); “To the Moon, Mars, and Beyond: Culture, Law and Ethics in Space-Faring Societies,” Bulletin of Science, Technology, and Society, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 430-437; “Exploration for the masses? Or joyrides for the ultra-rich? Prospects for space tourism,” Space Policy 22 (2006), pp.162-164; “How shall we live in space? Culture, law, and ethics in spacefaring society,” Space Policy, Vol. 22 (2006), pp. 249-255; “Almost Heaven: The Story of Women in Space [book review],” Space Policy (spring 2007); “Conference on Communicating Astronomy with the Public: taking action,” Advances in Space Research 38 (2006), pp. 2232-2236; and “Public communication strategy for NASA’s planetary protection program: expanding the dialogue,” Advances in Space Research 38 (2006), pp. 2225-2231.

Dr. Billings served as an officer of Women in Aerospace for 15 years, most recently as president for 2003. She received an Outstanding Achievement Award from WIA in 1991. She also received a Media Award from the Washington Space Business Roundtable in 1988. She served as a member of the NASA Advisory Council’s Biological and Physical Research Advisory Committee in 2004-2005. She is a member of the National Association of Science Writers, D.C. Science Writers Association, Society of Environmental Journalists, National Communication Association, International Communication Association, and Society for Social Studies of Science. She currently volunteers as a reading tutor to elementary students in the Arlington County public schools. In 2007, she was a Cheetah Conservation Station interpreter at the National Zoo in Washington, D.C.

###