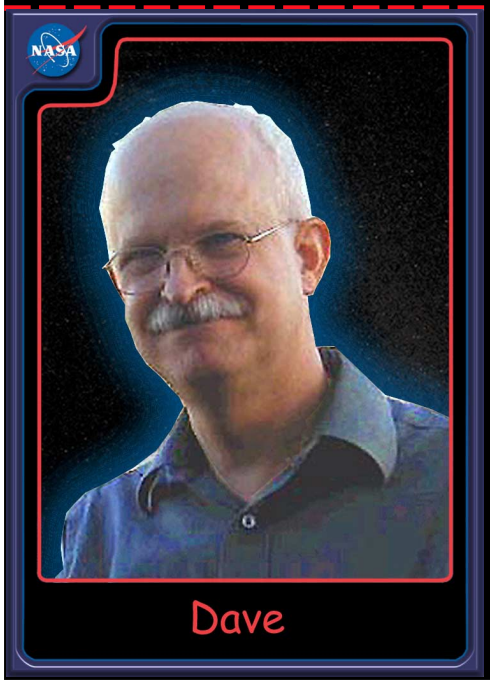
Career Cards



Name: David Des Marais

Title: Senior Research Space Scientist, Astrobiologist, Bio-Geo-Chemist

What I do: In my work, I study the evolution of micro-organisms over long periods of time, and then compare the findings with the correspondING changes in the Earth's evolution as a planet. We gather samples in places with extreme environments, such as thermal springs.

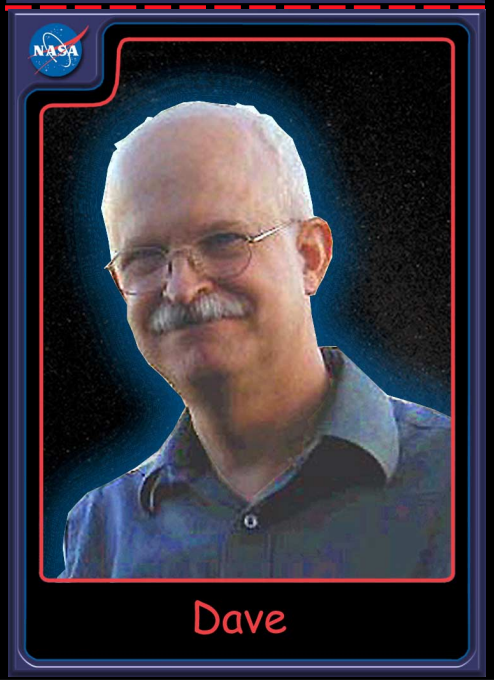
Education: Ph.D. in Geochemistry, Indiana University

Experience: One year as a Research Fellow at the Institute of Geophysics, UCLA; twenty-five years as research scientist in Exobiology, NASA Ames Research Center

Skills: interpersonal skills; communicating; leadership; curiosity; inquiry

Interests: exploration of coastal marine environments and ancient rocks in search of microbial ecosystems and fossils; photography; mining history

"Space exploration fulfills a natural desire—intrinsic to human nature—to go out and search for other forms of life. It drives societies to pursue excellence in science and technology"



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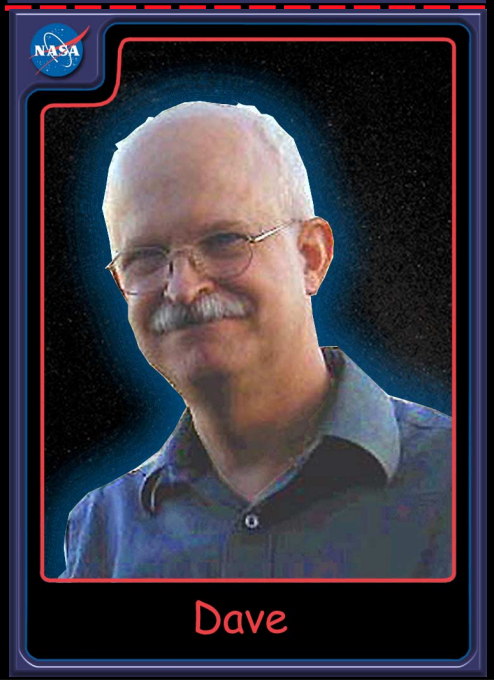

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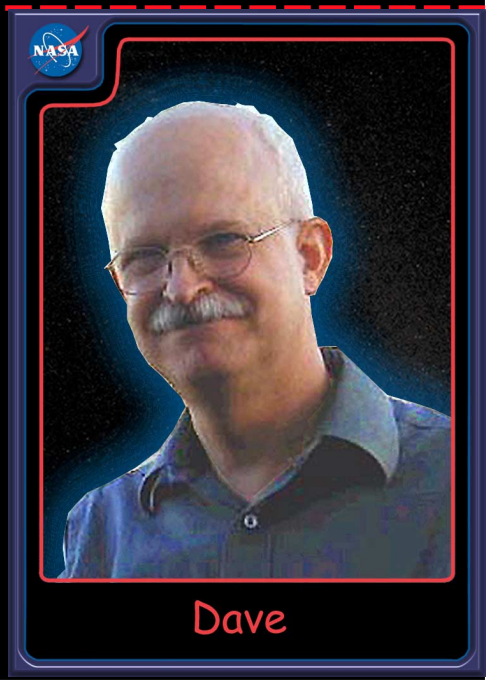

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