



VAPDC 2023 Summer Conference & Annual Meeting *Speaker Profile*



Roosevelt “Ted” Mercer, Jr.
CEO and Executive Director
Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority

Roosevelt “Ted” Mercer, Jr., Major General, USAF (Ret.), is the CEO and Executive Director of the Virginia Commercial Space Flight Authority. Since taking office on August 1, 2021, Mr. Mercer has made it the mission of Virginia Space to serve the Commonwealth’s economy by providing safe, reliable, and responsive space launch services, ensuring access to space at competitive prices, and maintaining secure facilities for testing of unmanned vehicles for integration into the National Airspace System (NAS).

Virginia Space is a political subdivision of Virginia. It owns and operates the Mid Atlantic Regional Spaceport collocated at NASA Wallops Flight Facility on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Mr. Mercer is responsible for the expansion and promotion of the commercial and government space industry in the Commonwealth. He directly oversees successful launch to space, industrial and economic development, and scientific and technological research and development.

Under Mr. Mercer's leadership, Virginia Space continues to reach milestones that signify rapid expansion, including successful launches, the development of new facilities, a new launch pad, and outreach activities with domestic and international space industry organizations.

Prior to joining Virginia Space, Mr. Mercer was the director of the Office of NextGen Collaboration and Messaging at the Federal Aviation Administration. He provided high level leadership by managing and building relationships with a broad representation of stakeholders in the aviation community, federal agencies, and international air navigation service providers.

Mr. Mercer oversaw communication and outreach activities, including performance 2 reporting for the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen). His organization supported the governance of the NextGen Executive Board, the NextGen Management Board, the NextGen Executive Weather Panel, and the NextGen Advisory Committee, managed interagency NextGen issues and coordinated the Office of NextGen’s international program to support global harmonization.

Prior to joining the FAA in April 2016, Mr. Mercer served as the Vice President and Director for Government Commercial & International Initiatives, Geospatial Systems, a division of ITT Exelis. He was responsible for government and industry partnerships and international initiatives.

Mr. Mercer served in the United States Air Force (USAF) for more than 32 years (retired January 1, 2008), most recently as Director of Plans and Policy for U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base (AFB) Nebraska. He was responsible for the development and implementation of national security policy, military strategy, space and weapons employment concepts and policy, and joint doctrine as it applied to the command and execution of its missions. Mr. Mercer was also responsible for the development of the nation’s strategic war plan, strategic support plans for theater combatant commanders, and contingency planning for the Global Strike mission.

Mr. Mercer has held Air Force command eight times from the squadron to the wing level. Some of his many USAF assignments include Commander, 45th Logistics Group, Patrick AFB, FL; Commander 30th Space Wing, Vandenberg AFB, CA; Commander, 81st Training Wing, Biloxi, MS; Commander 91st Operations Group, Minot, N.D.; Vice Director of Plans, U.S. Space Command, Peterson AFB, Colorado; Deputy Director of Operations, Headquarters Air Force Space Command, Peterson AFB, CO; and Commandant, Joint Forces Staff College, National Defense University, Norfolk, VA.

Entering the USAF in 1975, Mr. Mercer was a distinguished graduate of the University of Puget Sound’s ROTC program. His educational credentials include a BA in urban planning from the University of Puget Sound; MS in counseling from the University of Oklahoma; post-graduate Executive Programs at Syracuse University, National

Defense University, and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government; and a concentrated Executive Financial Development Program at the Wharton School of Business.

Mr. Mercer is a member of the Commonwealth of Virginia Governor's Aerospace Advisory Council; Vice Chairman of the board, National Strategic Research Institute for the University of Nebraska; member of the Board of Trustees for the Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY; a member of the National Association of Governing Boards; the Commercial Space Transportation Advisory Committee; and the National Space Council Users Advisory Group.