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Hubble Telescope Engineer Pulls Double Duty As Real-Life Knight

By SPACE.com Staff

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A long-time NASA engineer working on the Hubble Space Telescope is now a full-fledged knight in the Netherlands due to his work to help keep the renowned 20-year-old space observatory in working order.

Edward Cheung, an engineer who develops electrical systems and solutions for the [Hubble Space Telescope](#), was knighted on June 12 by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, in recognition of his accomplishments on Hubble and his work in educating the youth of his native Aruba (an island country belonging to the Kingdom of the Netherlands).

Cheung now lives in Greenbelt, Md., where he works at NASA's [Goddard Space Flight Center](#). He joined the Royal Order of the Netherlands Lion – the highest civilian order in the Dutch kingdom.

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The Hubble Space Telescope was launched in 1990, and has been visited by astronauts five times in 20 years for repairs or upgrades to its systems.

Cheung's knighthood marked the first time that the Order of the Netherlands Lion has been awarded to a native-born citizen of Aruba. The honor has been conferred upon eight people so far this year.

Cheung completed his undergraduate studies at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Worcester, Mass., and followed up with a Ph.D. in robotics from Yale University in New Haven, Conn. During this time, Cheung completed a summer internship at NASA's

Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Recognizing that Goddard was emerging as a hub for building flight hardware, Cheung later moved to Maryland to take part, according to a NASA profile.

In 1996, Cheung joined the Hubble Space Telescope development team and began work on such critical systems as the HST Orbital System Test and the Near Infrared Camera and Multi-Object Spectrometer cryogenic cooler.

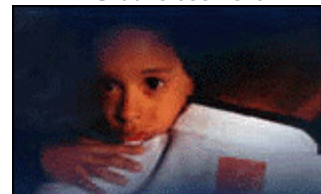
All the while, he continued to give guest lectures at schools and universities in Aruba.

In March 2002, Cheung's outreach efforts expanded even more with the launch of the ASCS/NCS Relay Unit Breaker Assembly or "ARUBA" box on the space shuttle Columbia's STS-109 mission to service the Hubble.

By naming the device after his country, Cheung captured the attention of the nation and generated public interest in technology and science in the process.

"It had a critical function to correct a fault that could compromise Hubble," Cheung said of the [servicing mission](#) in a statement. "The crew would be handling and interfacing

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Edward Cheung, long-time principal engineer for the Hubble Space Telescope Development Project was recently dubbed Knight of the Royal Order of the Netherlands Lion. In this picture, the Governor of Aruba, Fredis Refunjol, fastens the royal decoration to Cheung's jacket. Credit: Edward Cheung



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