

# Richard Alan Behnke — 70's

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## EDUCATION

1962            Graduated (valedictorian) Brookfield Central High School  
1966            BA in Physics, Rice University  
1968            MS in Space Physics and Astronomy, Rice University  
1970            PhD in Space Physics and Astronomy, Rice University

*Thesis:*                                *Vector measurements of the ion transport velocity with applications to F-Region Dynamics (1970)*

*Thesis Advisor:*                *Dr. William Gordon, Professor Emeritus, Dean of Engineering and Acting President, Rice University, member of the [National Academy of Sciences](#) (since 1968) and [National Academy of Engineering](#) (since 1975).*

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*Special moment:*                *Being a member of the Rice Freshman class in 1962 and watching close-up President John Kennedy deliver his famous “we will send a man to the moon this decade” speech during freshman orientation week.*

*Research interests:*            *Studies of the dynamics of the Earth’s ionosphere using incoherent scatter radar techniques.*

## WORK EXPERIENCE

**1992 to present**                                Head, Geospace Section (formerly the Upper Atmosphere Research Section, UARS), Division of Atmospheric and Geospace Sciences (formerly the Division of Atmospheric Sciences, ATM), NSF

As Head of the Geospace Section, I am responsible for the management, budgeting, planning and staffing of the 5 programs that comprise the Section: Aeronomy, Magnetospheric Physics, Solar Terrestrial Research, Space Weather Research and Upper Atmospheric Facilities. The overall budget of the Section is approximately \$50M. For my work in development of research initiatives (CEDAR, GEM, SHINE, space weather, cubesats), and educational initiatives (Faculty Development in Space Sciences), I was awarded NSF’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, in 2012.