

## Reflections on Friendship 7

**Michael D. Griffin**

**NASA Administrator, 2005–09**



**F**iftieth anniversaries of memorable events have a uniquely bittersweet flavor. Most of those who celebrate didn't participate, and many of the event's protagonists are gone. We are indeed incredibly fortunate that John and Annie Glenn, an eternal couple from a time when the world was a younger and fresher place, remain to help us remember and celebrate the flight of Friendship 7. They belong to the world as much as to America.

We are similarly fortunate that the citizens of Perth, and Australia, remember, and that together we can celebrate once again that magical, special time when mankind first ventured from the home planet. It could only happen once, and we from among all the generations who have ever lived or will ever live, were here to see it.

But we who are your American cousins also remember something more. We remember the warmth shown by the citizens of Perth to our emissary, John Glenn, when you lit up his path as he flew overhead in the dark. You were a part of that magical five-hour flight in a way that has lived on through the decades. Though I was then only twelve years old, I remember it too. I knew how special it was then, I know how special it remains, and on behalf of all of NASA between then and now, I thank you once more.