

Abe Silverstein grew up in Terre Haute, IN, with his five sisters and parents, Joseph and Eva. His dad, a Jewish immigrant from Ukraine, ran a men's clothing shop and served as a night watchman. Abe graduated from Rose Polytechnic Institute and accepted a job offer with an organization he'd never heard of -The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics in Virginia, NASA's forerunner. Abe Silverstein was a visionary engineer and leader whose accomplishments during his 40-year career continue to impact the aerospace community. He was instrumental in designing a massive subsonic wind tunnel, the success of the Centaur second-stage rocket, and much more.

Silverstein not only supervised the progress of the manned space flight missions, but he also named them. He also convinced NASA to use liquid nitrogen as the primary propellant of the Saturn V rockets used on the Apollo flights. The National Aviation Hall of Fame labeled him the Father of Apollo when they inducted him in 2014. In 1991 he was given an honorary degree from Rose-Hulman in recognition of his support. He planned the first three manned space flight programs -Gemini, Mercury, and Apollo with astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landing on the moon on July 20, 1969. Abe was a great leader and engineer who planned the US Space program. But he also was a great humanitarian in founding a Jewish Temple on the west side of Cleveland, where he had moved in the 1950s when serving as the Director of the NASA Glenn Research Center. He spearheaded The Cleveland Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism, a grassroots organization educating about the plight of Soviet Jews from 1963-1983. As the first such group in the world, it became the International Soviet Jewry Movement, which helped to save thousands of Jews from Soviet persecution. Abe died on June 1, 2001, at the age of 92. "The Architect of the US Space Program."