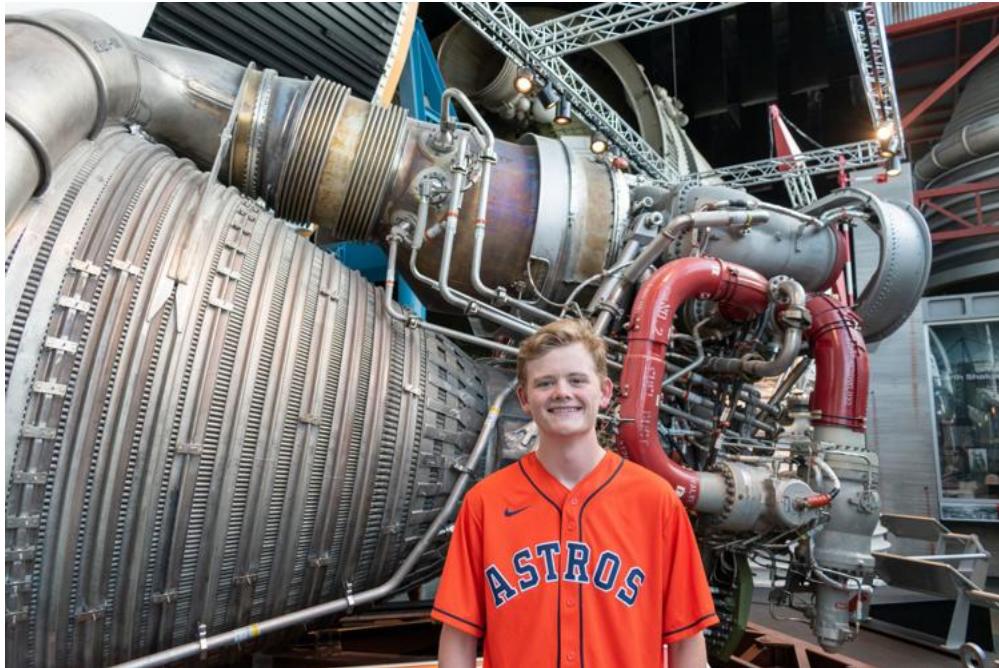


https://www.lebanondemocrat.com/maconcounty/news/phs-grad-wku-student-colovos-begins-nasa-internship/article_8edd9326-f8b0-59ce-975a-67d0ff6e436b.html

PHS grad, WKU student Colovos begins NASA internship

By Andy Dennis Macon County Times
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Portland High School grad Zachary Colovos began his internship Monday at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Submitted photo

Portland High School graduate Zachary Colovos, the 2020 valedictorian at the school, is in the beginning of a unique opportunity as an intern at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Colovos is among a crew of about 20 interns at the space center. He began his paid internship Monday, and he said if all goes well, at the conclusion of his time there with a degree in mechanical engineering in hand from Western Kentucky University, he will have a full-time job.

It wasn't easy to get the NASA internship, which is highly sought-after. He applied several times, finally got an interview and earned the position.

"I always knew this is what I wanted to do in some capacity," he said. "I still really don't know specifically what I want to do one day. I've been applying for this exact internship for three years now. I finally got an interview. I nailed the interview and got the job."

He will be the only intern in his department, which will involve work in water filtration systems for future Mars missions.

"This has been such an amazing opportunity," Colovos said. "I can't wait to get going. It's definitely been an uphill climb, but I'm proud to say I finally got there."

This is his first tour, as the internship semesters are called. He'll have three tours, alternating with semesters at WKU, where he is a rising junior. Colovos will work each tour in a different department. "If on good terms, I'm guaranteed a full-time job offer" when the program is complete.

He will be immersed in history with his lodging arrangements. He's staying as a guest of the widow of Rick Husband, the astronaut who was the commander of the shuttle Columbia in 2003, who is remarried and lives five minutes from JSC.

Housing is expensive in Houston. If he had found an apartment, most of his earnings would have gone toward those living expenses.

His father, pastor Tim Colovos of First Baptist Church, lent a hand, contacting several churches in the area and getting assistance from Sagemont Church, which is only about 15 minutes from the space center.

"They've graciously accepted me into their home," he said. "I'm just very blessed to be connected with these people. They've helped me out very much. I've got my own bedroom upstairs. They're letting me stay here free. It means a lot. Pretty much I'll be a member of their family for the semester. I love it so far, the traffic's a little crazy, but it's really, really nice."