

## **Forgotten Puerto Rican Hero**

The forgotten Puerto Rican I will be writing about is Pedro Rodriguez. He is the Director of a test laboratory at NASA and inventor of a portable, battery-operated lift seat for people suffering from knee arthritis. Pedro Rodriguez was born in Brooklyn, New York to the Puerto Rican salsa singer, Pellin Rodríguez and Elba Lopez Perez, who met in New York while Pellin's band was touring, both being people with musical talents, the opposite of what he did. During his school years, he excelled in the subjects of math and science. Rodriguez enrolled in the University of Alabama to pursue a master's degree.

After graduating, Rodriguez was the leader of the Solid Rocket Booster accident investigation team following the Space Shuttle Columbia accident in February 2003 and was also the project manager for the Space Launch Initiative program. After 32 years with NASA, Marshall Space Flight Center and serving in various senior leadership positions, including the Director of the test laboratory in the Engineering Directorate at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, and Assistant to the Chief Engineer, Rodriguez retired from NASA. Shortly after retirement he joined a small technology company in Huntsville Alabama, Victory Solutions, Inc. as Senior Vice President for Space Systems and Chief Technology Officer. In these roles he is responsible for developing new technologies and supporting company growth in highly technical engineering support services. Such an important person and we never knew about him.

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