# Blue Origin's New Shepard Rocket Successfully Returns to Crewed Missions with Historic Flight to Edge of Space



Blue Origin successfully launched its New Shepard rocket on May 19, 2024, marking its return to crewed missions after nearly two years. The flight took off at 9:36 a.m. CT from Blue Origin’s private facilities in West Texas. This mission, designated NS-25, carried six passengers, including venture capitalist Mason Angel, French entrepreneur Sylvain Chiron, software engineer Kenneth L. Hess, retired accountant Carol Schaller, aviator Gopi Thotakura, and Ed Dwight, a retired US Air Force captain and former astronaut candidate.

The launch is particularly notable for Ed Dwight, who at 90, became the oldest person to travel to the edge of space. Dwight was selected as the first Black astronaut candidate by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, but he did not make it to NASA’s astronaut corps back then. Dwight's flight lasted approximately 10 minutes, during which the crew experienced weightlessness and viewed the Earth from the edge of space.

This successful mission follows a hiatus caused by a failed launch in September 2022, where the rocket booster malfunctioned. After corrective measures and a successful uncrewed flight in December 2023, Blue Origin resumed its crewed missions.

The New Shepard rocket achieved speeds over three times the speed of sound, crossing the Kármán line, which is considered the start of outer space at 62 miles above Earth. The rocket booster and capsule both landed safely upon the mission's completion.

This flight was Blue Origin's seventh crewed mission and included passengers who purchased their flights, though the price of these tickets was not disclosed. Dwight’s participation was partially sponsored by the nonprofit Space for Humanity.