

Puerto Rican Marcos Berrios will graduate as an astronaut in March: "A great milestone for Puerto Rican science". ^[1]

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On December 6, 2021, NASA announced that Marcos Berríos was selected as one of the 10 astronaut candidates for that year (NASA).

Starting in March, Puerto Rico will have a new astronaut in the form of Marcos Berríos, who at the beginning of that month will graduate as part of the generation of candidates for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Artemis program, becoming the second Puerto Rican space explorer after Joseph "Joe" Acabá.

"To me, Marcos Berríos' achievement has significance both locally and nationally for Hispanics," said Professor Gerardo Morell, director of the NASA Puerto Rico Consortium. "Locally, it demonstrates the ability of Puerto Ricans to contribute to the space exploration program and also, nationally, it is an invitation from NASA to Hispanics that the doors are open," he added.

In 2021, Berríos was selected - from a pool of more than 12,000 applicants - as one of NASA's 10 new astronaut candidates. He then began a two-year training period and, on March 5, he will receive his "wings" at a graduation ceremony at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

After receiving his wings, Berrios will be eligible for space flights, which could include assignments to the International Space Station, future commercial destinations and missions to the moon. Down the road, the Tennessee-born Puerto Rican and space engineer could even go to Mars.

Dr. Mónica Feliú Mójer, director of Public Participation in Science for the organization Ciencia Puerto Rico, described Berríos' graduation as "a great milestone for Puerto Rican science.

Marcos Gabriel Berríos: the Puerto Rican candidate for NASA astronaut. Marcos Gabriel Berríos was born in Tennessee and grew up in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. - NASA

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