The James Webb Space Telescope had an unconventional beginning, and it faced and overcame many challenges, technical, managerial, and political, on its way to what we hope will be a long and scientifically bountiful life. Clearing these hurdles have also taught us much about how to tackle such projects in the future, including the large UV-optical telescopes that that Astro2020 favors in the search for life on extrasolar planets. In this colloquium I will describe some of my experiences in decadal reviews and the NASA missions they recommended. I will also describe a program on the star formation histories of the first galaxies that I hope to carry out as a member of the NIRCam team.