

THE NEW GUYS

The Historic Class of
Astronauts That Broke
Barriers and Changed
the Face of Space Travel

MEREDITH BAGBY



WILLIAM MORROW

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The first six American women astronauts, Rhea Seddon, Anna Fisher, Judy Resnik, Shannon Lucid, Sally Ride, and Kathy Sullivan, pose at a press conference announcing their selection.



The first three African American astronauts, Guy Bluford, Ron McNair, and Fred Gregory, pose for an official photo in their Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU) suits.



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To: the Astronaut Selection Committee

The task of answering the question "Why do you want to be an astronaut?" without sounding like it is a difficult one, there are several intellectual reasons that I can offer but my basic underlying motivation in applying for a position as a mission specialist is that becoming an astronaut has been one of my lifetime dreams. Somehow the idea and challenge of space travel captured my imagination and now the possibility of becoming an astronaut seems like "a dream come true." I feel that space exploration is perhaps the ultimate destiny of mankind and that being an astronaut is a lifetime mission which I can see my entire being as well as my intellectual resources and economic background into. The chance to participate in the early stages of that destiny would be quite a privilege. Furthermore, the type of "greenhouse" training that is required exactly meets my combined interests in both the medicinal-chemical physical sciences and medicine. Until now I have essentially had to choose between the two disciplines. The idea of being trained for a mission which spans both physical and mental demands on me meets a need somewhere in the depths of my being. I realize that this will be certain significant sacrifices which I must make in both my personal and professional lives in order to become a mission specialist astronaut but that these sacrifices which I thoughtfully and willingly will make if given the opportunity to fulfill a lifetime dream.

(Anna Lee Limon, MD)

Anna Lee Sims, MD

“Why do you want to become an astronaut?” Anna Fisher answers the question for the Astronaut Selection Committee.

Astronaut candidate Anna Fisher undergoes cardiopulmonary testing at Johnson Space Center during interview week.



Nichelle Nichols, aka *Star Trek*'s Lieutenant Uhura, sits in Mission Control for a 1977 NASA recruitment advertisement aimed at encouraging women and minority applicants to the space shuttle program.



Nichols joins NASA officials and the rest of the cast of the *Star Trek* television series at the 1976 *Enterprise* rollout in Palmdale, California. With her are DeForest Kelley, George Takei, James Doohan, Leonard Nimoy, Walter Koenig, and series creator Gene Roddenberry.



The official 1978 class photo of Astronaut Group 8, or “The New Guys,” taken in Johnson’s Teague Auditorium.



Rhea Seddon hoists classmate and future husband Hoot Gibson overhead while performing zero-gravity training in NASA’s “Vomit Comet.”



Sally Ride gets ready to jump into Biscayne Bay for water survival training at Florida's Homestead Air Force Base.



Astronaut candidates during water survival training at Florida's Homestead Air Force Base. Pictured from left to right: Shannon Lucid, Steve Hawley, Jeffrey Hoffman, Ron McNair, and Rhea Seddon.



Rhea Seddon (left) prepares to fly back seat in a T-38 with Hoot Gibson (right).



Director of flight operations George Abbey (center)—also known as the Dark Lord or UNO for “Unidentified NASA Official”—walks out with the crew of STS-5 in a rare photograph.



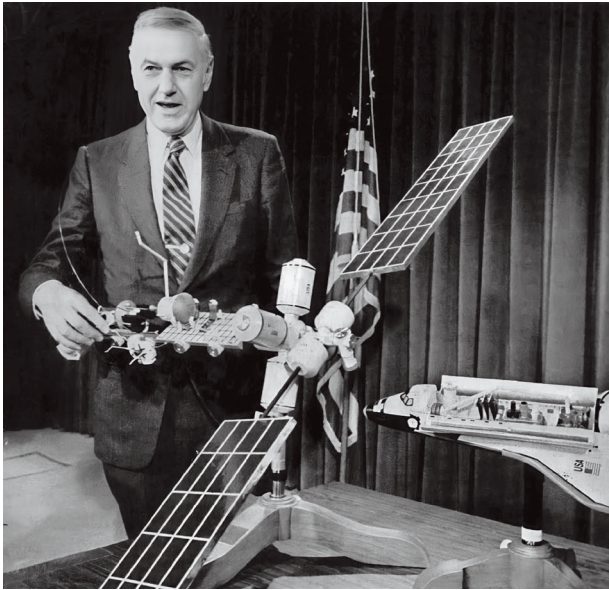
Sally Ride graces the January 1983 cover of *Ms. Magazine* ahead of her historic first flight.



Sally Ride (left) works alongside a pregnant Anna Fisher (right) leading up to Sally's first flight on STS-7.



Guy Bluford, the first African American to fly to space, speaks with Vanessa Williams, the first African American Miss America, and Coretta Scott King at a press conference following his historic flight on STS-8.



NASA administrator James M. Beggs poses with an early model of the space station in 1984.



Ron McNair makes history as the first person to play a musical instrument in space on STS-41B.



Bruce McCandless II debuts the Manned Maneuvering Unit (MMU) on STS-41B, making him the first human satellite.



Judy Resnik, Steve Hawley, pilot Mike Coats, commander Hank Hartsfield, Mike Mullane, and Charles Walker of the STS-41D crew in orbit.



Kathy Sullivan leads the crew of STS-41G to the Astrovan for a ride to the launchpad. STS-41G, which included Sally Ride, was the first time two women traveled to space together.



Kathy Sullivan (right) makes history as the first American woman to perform a spacewalk with David Leetsma (left), as they perform a satellite refueling experiment.

Sally Ride kisses husband and classmate Steve Hawley after STS-41G lands at Cape Canaveral, Florida, on January 2, 1984.



El Onizuka, the first Asian American in space, wears a headband emblazoned with the rising sun symbol and the word "kamikaze" on STS-51C.

Dale Gardner holds up a FOR SALE sign after he and Joseph Allen miraculously retrieved two wayward satellites on STS-51A.





Couples Bill and Anna Fisher, and Hoot Gibson and Rhea Seddon hold their “Astro-tots,” Kristin Fisher and Paul Gibson.

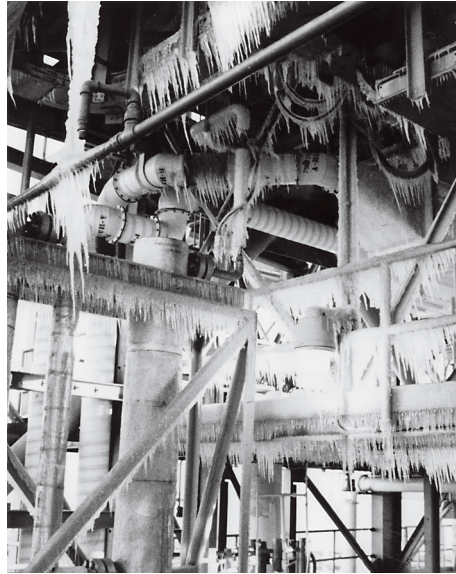


The *Challenger* crew attends a training session before the launch of STS-51L. Pictured from left to right: El Onizuka, Ron McNair, Gregory Jarvis, Teacher in Space winner Christa McAuliffe, Judy Resnik, and backup payload specialist Barbara Morgan, who was the runner-up for the Teacher in Space competition.



The crew of STS-51L, Mike Smith, El Onizuka, Judy Resnik, and Dick Scobee, runs through simulations in the Shuttle Mission Simulator.

Icicles form on the launchpad the night before *Challenger's* doomed launch, due to record-low temperatures at Kennedy Space Center.



Fred Gregory (left) and Dick Covey (right), acting as capsule communicators (CapComs), struggle to understand what is happening in the immediate aftermath of the *Challenger* accident.



President Ronald Reagan and First Lady Nancy Reagan with the Scobee (left) and Smith (right) families at the memorial service for the fallen *Challenger* crew.



A diver is hoisted aboard the USS *Preserver* while recovering pieces of the space shuttle *Challenger* from the ocean.



The esteemed members of the Rogers Commission swear in on the first day of the hearings to investigate the cause of the *Challenger* accident. The members included Sally Ride, Neil Armstrong, and Nobel Prize–winning physicist Richard Feynman.



A recovered segment from *Challenger*'s right wing.

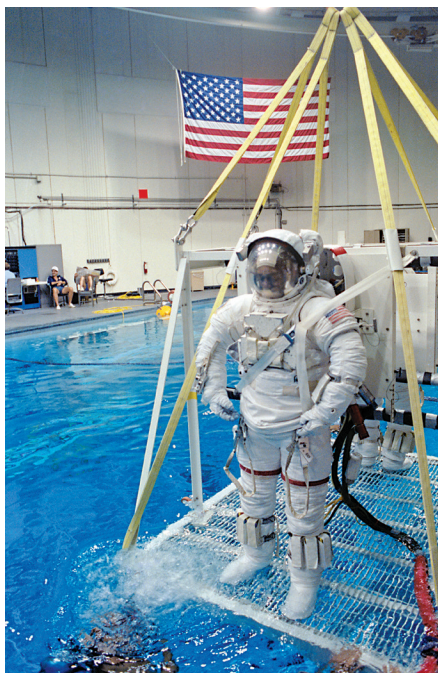


Kathy Sullivan prepares to don her EMU suit in the airlock of *Discovery* during the Hubble Space Telescope's deployment mission.



Shannon Lucid (left) jokes with the “Yuris,” Usachov (center) and Onufriyenko (right), on *Mir* space station, where she spent a total of 188 days, setting a new space endurance record for most time in space by any American astronaut.

Guy Bluford, wearing an EMU suit, is lowered into Johnson’s Weightless Environment Training Facility as part of his training for STS-39.



NASA deputy administrator Fred Gregory greets the coffins of *Columbia*’s fallen crew at Delaware’s Dover Air Force Base on February 5, 2003.

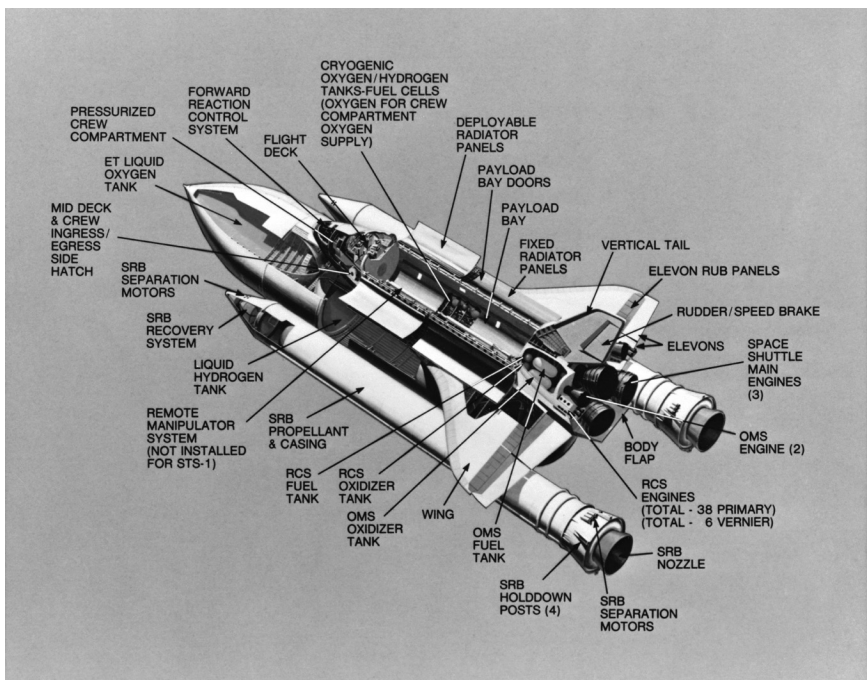


Shannon Lucid serves as CapCom for STS-135, the final mission of the space shuttle program, on July 12, 2011.



The surviving first women astronauts, Shannon Lucid, Kathy Sullivan, Anna Fisher, and Rhea Seddon, reunite with their mentor Carolyn Huntoon for a Christmas party at Villa Capri in 2017.

Appendix



An artist's rendition of a cutaway of the space shuttle *Columbia* takes some liberties to reveal major components of the vehicle. Note the external liquid oxygen tank, top left, and twin solid rocket boosters (SRBs) flanking the vehicle.

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Chapter 1: Ad Astra

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