



## December 2016 Her Story ENewsletter Astronauts

Fascination with space travel has intrigued generations, probably for millennia. More recently, every rocket launch and NASA mission inspired awe. Many of us are still enthralled by science fiction movies including the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* episodes. Let's learn about some real American women astronauts: Mae Jemison and Ellen Ochoa. We selected these two women to profile; there have been other women astronauts with whom you may be familiar.

Chemical engineer and medical doctor **Mae Jemison** was the first African-American woman selected for the astronaut corps. She was also the first African-American woman in space, when she flew aboard the space shuttle *Endeavor* in 1992. Jemison completed her undergraduate engineering degree at Stanford and received her medical degree from Cornell University. After completing her internship, Jemison joined the Peace Corps and served as a doctor in Sierra Leone and Liberia from 1983-1985. She was selected for the astronaut corps in 1987. Aboard the *Endeavor*, she conducted experiments on motion sickness and weightlessness and noted their effects on the crew. Upon her return to Earth, she remarked on how much women and minorities could contribute to society if only they were given the opportunity.

Jemison was on the faculty on Dartmouth College for many years and is currently affiliated with Cornell University. She works very hard on behalf of science education to ensure that minorities are participating in that education. She founded a company that develops science and technology for daily life. In addition, she is involved in working to safeguard the sustainability of interstellar travel. The recipient of many awards, Mae Jemison is a public speaker who advocates for science and technology. She has been inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame.



**Mae Jemison**

**Electrical engineer Ellen Ochoa** became the first Hispanic woman in space, when she flew on the space shuttle *Discovery* in 1993. The holder of three patents related to optical systems and noise removal in images, Ochoa joined the astronaut corps in 1990. Crediting astronaut Sally Ride as a significant role model, Ochoa flew in space a total of four times and has logged nearly 1,000 hours in space. Her assignments included flight software, computer hardware development, and robotics development, testing, and training.

From 2007-2013, she served as deputy director of the Johnson Space Center and, since 2013, has served as director. She is the second female and the first Hispanic to hold this position. Ochoa said: "Usually, girls weren't encouraged to go to college and major in math and science. My high school calculus teacher made math appealing and motivated me to continue studying it in college." Ochoa is also a classical flutist and considered a musical career before she opted to pursue the sciences instead.



**Ellen Ochoa**

Mae Jemison and Ellen Ochoa are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America*. Their accomplishments inspire us and remind us as well how important it is to continue to tell women's stories.

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