



Sally Kristen Ride, Ph.D.

May 26, 1951 - July 23, 2012

Sally Ride died peacefully on July 23rd, 2012 after a courageous 17-month battle with pancreatic cancer. Sally lived her life to the fullest, with boundless energy, curiosity, intelligence, passion, joy, and love. Her integrity was absolute; her spirit was immeasurable; her approach to life was fearless.

Sally was a physicist, the first American woman to fly in space, a science writer, and the president and CEO of Sally Ride Science. She had the rare ability to understand the essence of things and to inspire those around her to join her pursuits.

Sally's historic flight into space captured the nation's imagination and made her a household name. She became a symbol of the ability of women to break barriers and a hero to generations of adventurous young girls. After retiring from NASA, Sally used her high profile to champion a cause she believed in passionately—inspiring young people, especially girls, to stick with their interest in science, to become scientifically literate, and to consider pursuing careers in science and engineering.

In addition to Tam O'Shaughnessy, her partner of 27 years, Sally is survived by her mother, Joyce; her sister, Bear; her niece, Caitlin, and nephew, Whitney; her staff of 40 at Sally Ride Science; and many friends and colleagues around the country.

Visit Sally's Videos and Photos section to see the photos described below.

GROWING UP

Sally was born on May 26, 1951, in Encino, California, and she spent her childhood there. As a young girl, Sally was fascinated by science. She credited her parents with encouraging her interests. Sally grew up playing with a chemistry set and a telescope. She also grew up playing sports. She competed in national junior tennis tournaments and was good enough to win a tennis scholarship to Westlake School for Girls in Los Angeles.

BECOMING AN ASTRONAUT

In 1977, Sally already had degrees in physics and English from Stanford University and was about to finish her Ph.D. in physics when she saw an ad in the Stanford student newspaper saying that NASA was looking for astronauts. Up until then, astronauts had been military test pilots—and they all had been male. But now NASA was looking for scientists and engineers, and was allowing women to apply. Sally immediately sent in her application—along with 8,000 other people. From that group, 35 new astronauts, including six women, were chosen to join the astronaut corps. NASA selected Sally as an astronaut candidate in January 1978.

Sally in the shuttle skipper's seat

ASTRONAUT TRAINING

Sally's astronaut training included parachute jumping, water survival, weightlessness, radio communications, and navigation. She enjoyed flight training so much that flying became one of her hobbies. During the second and third flights of the space shuttle Columbia, she worked on the ground as a communications officer, relaying messages from mission control to the shuttle crews. She was part of the team that developed the robot arm used by shuttle crews to deploy and retrieve satellites.

STS-7 Patch

STS 41-G Patch

SPACE MISSIONS

In August 1979, after a yearlong training and evaluation period, Sally became eligible for assignment as an astronaut on a space shuttle flight crew. She was selected as a mission specialist for mission STS-7 aboard the shuttle Challenger. When Challenger blasted off from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, on June 18, 1983, Sally soared into history as the first American woman in space.

Accompanying Sally aboard Challenger were Captain Robert L. Crippen, the spacecraft commander; Captain Fredrick H. Hauck, the pilot; and fellow mission specialists Colonel John M. Fabian and Dr. Norman E. Thagard. This was the second flight for the orbiter Challenger and the first mission with a five-person crew. During the mission, the crew deployed satellites for Canada (ANIK C-2) and Indonesia (PALAPA B-1); operated the Canadian-built robot arm to perform the first deployment and retrieval with the Shuttle Pallet Satellite (SPAS-01); conducted the first formation flying of the shuttle with a free-flying satellite (SPAS-01); carried and operated the first U.S./German cooperative materials science payload (OSTA-2); and operated the Continuous Flow Electrophoresis System (CFES) and the Monodisperse Latex Reactor (MLR) experiments. The crew also activated seven Getaway Specials—small experiments sent into space by private individuals or groups. The mission lasted 147 hours before Challenger landed on a lakebed runway at Edwards Air Force Base, California, on June 24.

"The thing that I'll remember most about the flight is that it was fun," said Sally. "In fact, I'm sure it was the most fun I'll ever have in my life."

Sally's second flight was the 13th shuttle flight, STS 41-G, which launched from Kennedy Space Center on October 5, 1984. The crew of seven—the largest to date for a shuttle mission—included Crippen as commander, Captain Jon A. McBride as pilot, fellow mission specialists Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan and Commander David C. Leestma, and two payloads specialists, Commander Marc Garneau and Paul Scully-Power. During the 8-day mission, the crew deployed the Earth Radiation Budget Satellite and conducted scientific observations of the Earth with the OSTS-3 pallet and Large Format Camera, as well as demonstrating potential satellite refueling with an EVA and associated hydrazine transfer. After 197 hours in flight, Challenger landed at Kennedy Space Center on October 13.

In June 1985, Sally was assigned to the crew of STS 61-M, but mission training was halted in January 1986 after the Challenger exploded shortly after takeoff, killing all seven crewmembers. Sally served on the Presidential Commission investigating the tragedy. After the investigation was completed, she was assigned to NASA headquarters as special assistant to the administrator for long-range and strategic planning. There she wrote an influential report entitled "Leadership and America's Future in Space," and became the first director of NASA's Office of Exploration.

BEYOND SPACE

Sally retired from NASA in 1987. She became a science fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University. In 1989, Sally joined the faculty at the University of California San Diego as a professor of physics and director of the California Space Institute.

In 2001 she founded her own company, Sally Ride Science, to pursue her long-time passion for motivating young girls and boys to stick with their interests in science and to consider pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. The company creates innovative classroom materials,

classroom programs, and professional development training for teachers.

Long an advocate for improved science education, Sally co-wrote seven science books for children—To Space and Back (with Sue Oakie); and Voyager; The Third Planet; The Mystery of Mars; Exploring Our Solar System; Mission Planet Earth; and Mission Save the Planet (all with Tam O'Shaughnessy). Sally also initiated and directed NASA-funded education projects designed to fuel middle school students' fascination with science, including EarthKAM and GRAIL MoonKAM.

Sally and President Obama

Sally was a member of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology and the National Research Council's Space Studies Board, and she served on the boards of the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and the NCAA Foundation. Sally was a fellow of the American Physical Society and a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, and she served on the boards of the Aerospace Corporation and the California Institute of Technology. She was the only person to serve on the commissions investigating both the Challenger and Columbia space shuttle disasters.

Sally received numerous honors and awards. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame, the California Hall of Fame, the Aviation Hall of Fame, and the Astronaut Hall of Fame, and she received the Jefferson Award for Public Service, the von Braun Award, the Lindbergh Eagle, and the NCAA's Theodore Roosevelt Award. She was twice awarded the NASA Space Flight Medal. In 2012 Sally was honored with the National Space Grant Distinguished Service Award.

In lieu of flowers, you may wish to make a gift in memory of Sally to the Sally

Ride Pancreatic Cancer Initiative (Fund 4191).

Checks should be made out to: UCSD Foundation.

Also, in either the memo line or in an enclosed note please state that the gift is made in memory of Sally Ride or to the Sally Ride Pancreatic Cancer Initiative (Fund 4191).

Gift mailing address:

Pam Werner
Executive Director of Development
UCSD Health Sciences Dev.
9500 Gilman Dr. #0853
La Jolla, CA 92093-0853

If you prefer using a credit card, please call Pam Werner at 858.246.1556.

Please note that ninety-four percent of donations will go toward pancreatic cancer research at UCSD Moore's Cancer Center. Thank you.

<https://www.sallyridescience.com./sallyride/memory>

Sally Ride's Timeline:

Year

Event

1951 Born on May 26 in Los Angeles, California

1968 Graduates from Westlake School for Girls in Los Angeles, California

1973 Receives bachelor's degrees in physics and English from Stanford University

1975 Receives master's degree in physics from Stanford University

1977 Applies to become an astronaut when NASA conducts a national search for new astronauts and, for the first time, allows women to apply

1978 Selected by NASA as an astronaut candidate—one of six women among 35 trainees chosen. Receives Ph.D. degree in physics from Stanford University

1978 - 1982 Astronaut training Parachute jumping and water survival, Flying in T-38 jets

Developing shuttle's robot arm, Serves as communications officer (CAPCOM) for STS-2 and STS-3 missions, communicating with shuttle crews from mission control

1983 On June 18, becomes the first American woman to fly in space. Serves as mission specialist on STS-7, aboard space shuttle Challenger During the mission, the crew of five operates the robotic arm, deploys and retrieves a free-flying satellite, and conducts materials science and pharmaceutical experiments.

1984 Flies on second space shuttle mission Serves as mission specialist on STS 41-G, also aboard Challenger During the mission, the crew of seven deploys a satellite to measure the balance of incoming energy from the Sun and outgoing energy from Earth, and conducts science observations of Earth.

1985 Assigned to crew of third space shuttle flight, STS 61-M

1986 Mission training suspended in January after the space shuttle Challenger explodes shortly after launch Appointed to the Presidential Commission investigating the Challenger disaster

1987 Assigned to NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Creates NASA's Office of Exploration for long-range planning. Produces a widely acclaimed report, Leadership and America's Future in Space. Retires from NASA.

Becomes a Science Fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms

Control at Stanford University

1988 Inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame

1989 Becomes professor of physics and director of the California Space Institute at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Pursues her longtime passion, encouraging young women to study science and math

1994 Creates EarthKAM, an ongoing NASA program that involves middle school students in selecting, shooting, downloading, and studying photos of Earth from cameras aboard the International Space Station

1995 Wins prestigious American Institute of Physics Children's Science Writing Award with coauthor Tam O'Shaughnessy for *The Third Planet: Exploring The Earth From Space*

2001 Starts her own company, Sally Ride Science, to provide exciting science programs, events, and publications for upper elementary and middle school students and their parents and teachers

2003 Named to NASA's Accident Investigation Board to investigate the cause of the space shuttle Columbia disaster Inducted into the Astronaut Hall of Fame at Kennedy Space Center

2005 Awarded the NCAA's Theodore Roosevelt "Teddy" Award, the highest honor presented to a former student-athlete

2006 Inducted into the California Hall of Fame

2007 Inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame

2009 Named one of America's Best Leaders by U.S. News & World Report Partnered with ExxonMobil to create the Sally Ride Science Academy to help teachers ignite students' interest in STEM and STEM careers.

2009-2013 Awarded Education and Public Outreach lead for NASA's GRAIL MoonKAM, which allows middle school students across the country to request and study photos snapped from twin satellites orbiting the Moon

2012 Awarded the 2012 National Space Grant Distinguished Service Award Continued to serve as president and CEO of Sally Ride Science and to encourage young people across the country to pursue their interests in science until her death on July 23rd, 2012

Tribute Wall



“ 14 files added to the album Memories Album



Reflecting on Memories - July 28, 2012 at 11:58 AM