

First American Woman in Space: Sally Ride

by RV Staff Writer A.A.

Sally Ride was the first woman astronaut from the U.S. to go into space. She flew two missions on the space shuttle. One was in August 1983, and the other was in October 1984. Both times she flew as a member of the crew of the space shuttle *Challenger*.

Sally Ride was born in 1951 in Los Angeles, California. She was interested in science, but she was also an excellent tennis player. She studied physics at Stanford University, where she earned her doctorate degree.

While Dr. Ride was at Stanford, she answered an ad in the student newspaper for students interested in the space program. She was accepted into the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) program in 1978 to become an astronaut.

During her space missions, she was the first woman to operate a robotic arm, and she also retrieved a satellite using the robotic arm. She spent a total of 343 hours in space, which is over 14 days.

Dr. Ride was getting ready for another mission in 1986 when the *Challenger* space shuttle exploded. She was appointed to a group that studied what had gone wrong with the shuttle. She later became part of a group at NASA that made plans for future space missions.

In 1987 Dr. Ride retired from NASA and began working and teaching at Stanford. In 2003 she was part of the investigation into the next shuttle accident, this time on the space shuttle *Columbia*.

Dr. Sally Ride died in 2012. Although she was famous as the first American woman in space, she said she always thought of herself just one way: as an astronaut. She inspired many people, both male and female.

Questions

1. What did Sally Ride study at college?
2. What does NASA stand for?
3. What was the name of the space shuttle that took Dr. Ride into space?
4. What was Dr. Ride famous for?