

NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY



ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARDS

HONORING THOSE WHO ROCK THE STARS

2025

AWARDS

WINNERS TO BE ANNOUNCED ON NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY (5/5)

Astronaut Rock Star **Diamond Award:**

Reserved for legacy Astronauts, recognized by Astronauts, whose historical contributions have paved the way for future exploration. This prestigious accolade recognizes not only their enduring impact on space exploration and STEAM education, but will also include tributes from Astronauts who were directly inspired by the legacy of these remarkable individuals.

Astronaut Rock Star **Platinum Award:**

Honoring Astronauts, recognized by Astronauts & Rock Stars, who have made significant contributions to fostering public interest in space exploration in the present day. These individuals inspire and engage the public through their dedication and passion for space exploration, and their trailblazing and history making initiatives.

Astronaut Rock Star **Gold Award:**

Given to Astronauts, individuals or groups actively working to advance STEM/STEAM education, particularly as related to Space. This award recognizes their efforts in shaping the future of space exploration by nurturing the next gen of scientists, engineers, innovators and explorers.

ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARDS

2025 DIAMOND AWARD

HONORING CHRISTA MCAULIFFE



IN THIS HISTORICAL PHOTO FROM SHARON CHRISTA MCAULIFFE RECEIVED A PREVIEW OF MICROGRAVITY DURING A SPECIAL FLIGHT ABOARD NASA'S KC-135 "ZERO GRAVITY" AIRCRAFT.. (PHOTO: NASA)

In 1986 Christa McAuliffe stepped from the classroom into history. As part of a radical new approach by NASA, she was to be the first civilian in space. While her mission on the shuttle ended tragically, her mission as a teacher continues to this day. She was chosen out of 11,500 applicants.

An ordinary person - to whom ordinary people could relate - doing the extraordinary.

Christa's presence in the space program helped boost public interest and curiosity, and through her participation she became an inspiration to the teaching profession as well. On January 28, 1986, her mission in space ended in tragedy. However, her message continues to speak to us today.

Christa's motto was "I touch the future, I teach", and she is teaching us still.

ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARDS

2025 DIAMOND AWARD

HONORING CHRISTA MCAULIFFE

ASTRONAUT CHRISTA MCAULIFFE IS BEING RECOGNIZED FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL DIAMOND ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARD, AS PART OF NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY, IN RECOGNITION OF HER EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY AS AN EDUCATOR AND PIONEER. SELECTED FROM MORE THAN 11,000 APPLICANTS FOR NASA'S GROUNDBREAKING TEACHER IN SPACE PROGRAM, CHRISTA WAS CHOSEN TO BRING THE WONDER OF SPACE DIRECTLY INTO AMERICAN CLASSROOMS. CHRISTA'S VISION—TO INSPIRE, TO EDUCATE, AND TO REACH YOUNG MINDS—CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE HOW WE TEACH AND DREAM.

EDUCATION IS THE ENGINE THAT DRIVES HUMAN PROGRESS, AND CHRISTA BELIEVED DEEPLY IN ITS POWER TO CHANGE LIVES. HER PASSION FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND HER FAMOUS WORDS, "I TOUCH THE FUTURE, I TEACH," REMAIN A GUIDING FORCE BEHIND COUNTLESS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THOSE AT THE MCAULIFFE-SHEPARD DISCOVERY CENTER. THROUGH HER LEGACY, CHRISTA REMINDS US THAT EDUCATION AND SPACE EXPLORATION ARE FOREVER LINKED—NOT JUST AS A MEANS OF REACHING THE STARS, BUT AS A WAY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND OUR OWN PLANET, SOLVE CRITICAL CHALLENGES, AND SHAPE A MORE INNOVATIVE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE. THE LESSONS SHE HOPED TO TEACH FROM ORBIT NOW LIVE ON THROUGH THE GENERATIONS OF STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS SHE CONTINUES TO INSPIRE.

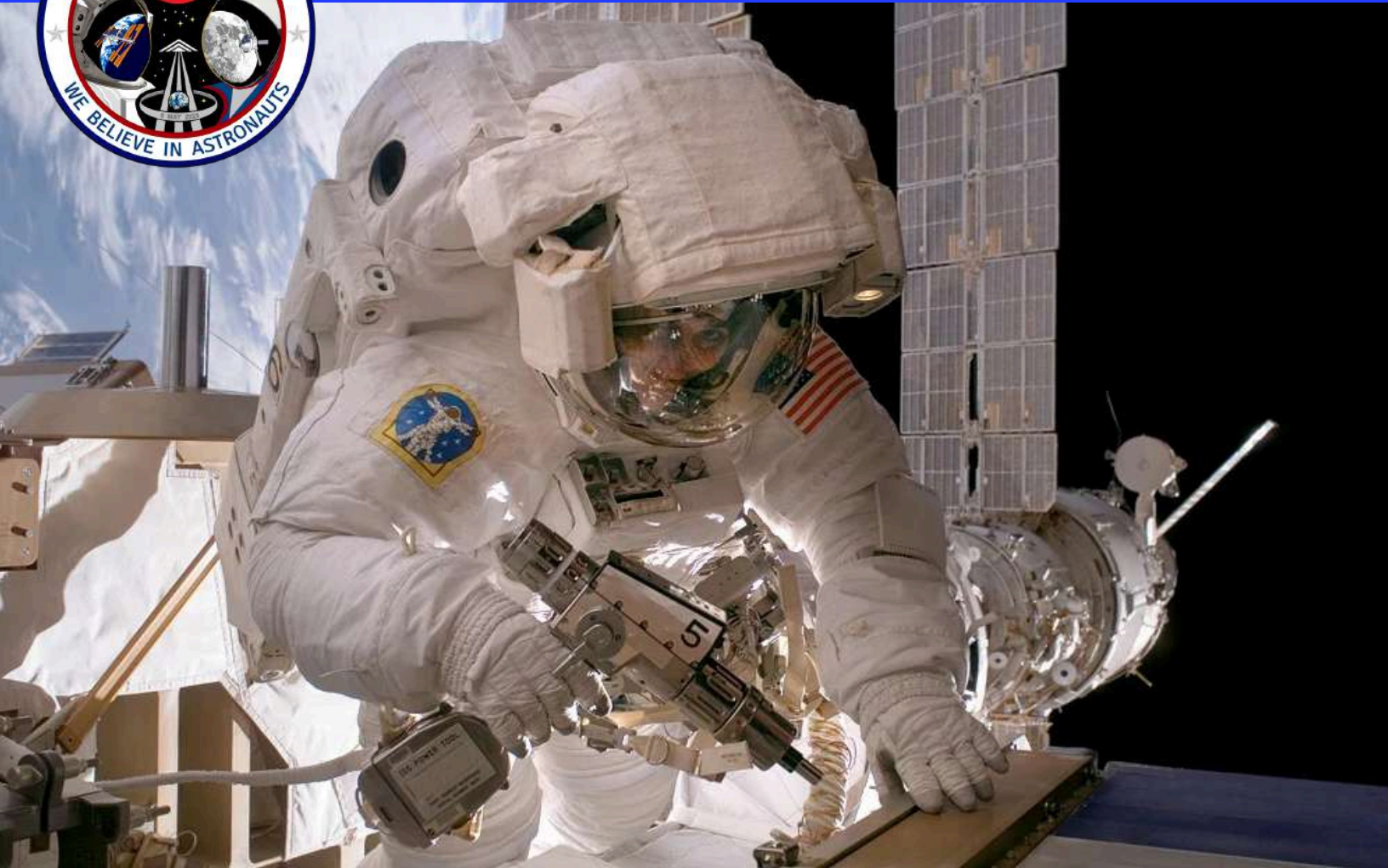
THE DIAMOND ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARD, RESERVED FOR LEGACY ASTRONAUTS WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE SHAPED THE COURSE OF EXPLORATION, IS A FITTING TRIBUTE TO CHRISTA MCAULIFFE'S ENDURING INFLUENCE. AS ASTRONAUTS WHO FOLLOWED IN HER FOOTSTEPS SHARE HOW HER STORY INSPIRED THEIR OWN JOURNEYS, WE CELEBRATE NOT ONLY A REMARKABLE INDIVIDUAL BUT A MOVEMENT SHE HELPED IGNITE. CHRISTA'S MISSION WAS ALWAYS BIGGER THAN ONE LAUNCH—SHE DARED TO TEACH FROM SPACE SO THAT OTHERS MIGHT LEARN WITHOUT LIMITS. HER LEGACY IS A REMINDER THAT SPACE IS NOT JUST ABOUT REACHING BEYOND EARTH, BUT ABOUT LIFTING UP THOSE HERE ON IT.

WITH HONOR & RESPECT,
SHARON CHRISTA MCAULIFFE (NÉE CORRIGAN)
(SEPTEMBER 2, 1948 – JANUARY 28, 1986)

ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARDS

2025 PLATINUM AWARD

CELEBRATING SUNITA WILLIAMS



ASTRONAUT SUNITA L. WILLIAMS, EXPEDITION 14 FLIGHT ENGINEER, USED A PISTOL GRIP TOOL AS SHE WORKED ON THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION IN THE FIRST OF THREE SPACEWALKS SLATED TO OCCUR OVER A NINE-DAY PERIOD. THE 7-HOUR 55-MINUTE SPACEWALK TOOK PLACE ON JAN. 31, 2007. (PHOTO: NASA)

Astronaut Sunita “Sunī” Williams, a true pioneer in STEM education and space flight, has completed a record holding 62 hours and 6 minutes of spacewalk time to date, and logged 608 days in space over her three missions. Her path from US Naval aviator to trailblazing NASA Astronaut showcases an ongoing legacy of courage, exploration, resilience, and continues to inspire, particularly youth, to pursue careers in STEM fields, and demonstrates that anything is possible with hard work, determination, and a passion for learning. "The more knowledge you gain, the more courage you will have to dream big and achieve great things". - Suni Williams

2025 PLATINUM AWARD

CELEBRATING SUNITA WILLIAMS

ASTRONAUT SUNITA “SUNI” WILLIAMS IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE SECOND ANNUAL ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR PLATINUM AWARD, PRESENTED AS PART OF NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY, IN RECOGNITION OF HER UNPARALLELED CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPACE EXPLORATION AND HER ENDURING COMMITMENT TO ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN THE JOURNEY BEYOND EARTH. WITH OVER 608 DAYS IN SPACE ACROSS THREE MISSIONS AND A RECORD-SETTING 62 HOURS AND 6 MINUTES OF SPACEWALK TIME—WILLIAMS HAS HELPED REDEFINE WHAT’S POSSIBLE THROUGH PERSEVERANCE, PRECISION, AND PASSION. FROM HER HISTORIC ROLES IN CURRENT DAY SPACE EXPLORATION TO HER EXTENSIVE WORK ABOARD THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION, SUNI HAS BOLDLY CARRIED THE MISSION OF HUMAN SPACEFLIGHT INTO NEW ERAS AND INSPIRED COUNTLESS GENERATIONS ALONG THE WAY.

WILLIAMS’S DEDICATION TO OUTREACH, HER COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION, AND HER DEEP BELIEF IN THE POWER OF TEAMWORK HAVE MADE HER A ROLE MODEL AROUND THE WORLD. THROUGH HER VISIBLE LEADERSHIP AND GROUNDED OPTIMISM, SUNI HAS BECOME A VITAL BRIDGE BETWEEN COMPLEX SPACE MISSIONS AND THE EVERYDAY PEOPLE THEY SERVE—SPARKING CURIOSITY, ELEVATING STEAM EDUCATION, AND PROVING THAT SPACE IS A PLACE FOR EVERYONE, AND ULTIMATELY, MAKES OUR LIFE BETTER ON EARTH.

THE ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR PLATINUM AWARD CELEBRATES THOSE WHO ACTIVELY INSPIRE TODAY’S PUBLIC AND FUTURE EXPLORERS. NOMINATED AND SELECTED BY ASTRONAUTS AND ROCK STARS ALIKE, THE AWARD ACKNOWLEDGES SUNI’S GROUNDBREAKING CAREER AND THE SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION SHE EMBODIES. AS SHE CONTINUES TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SPACEFLIGHT AND FUEL THE IMAGINATIONS OF GENERATIONS TO COME, SUNI WILLIAMS REMINDS US THAT THE JOURNEY TO THE STARS IS JUST BEGINNING—AND IT STARTS HERE ON EARTH, WITH COURAGE, COMMITMENT, AND CONNECTION.

ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARDS

2025 GOLD AWARD

HIGHLIGHTING WENDY LAWRENCE



ASTRONAUT WENDY LAWRENCE ON THE FLIGHT DECK OF SPACE SHUTTLE ENDEAVOUR (STS-67). (PHOTO: NASA)

Wendy Lawrence, trailblazing Naval Academy graduate, helicopter pilot and Astronaut, is passionate about education and inspiring the next generation to “Dare to Dream” especially in fields of STEM/STEAM. Her fearless advocacy, and support of numerous organizations, is exemplary and has helped to inspire thousands of students.

“Growing up in Southern California during the Vietnam War, I realize that my life could have turned out very differently. But I was hooked by the dream of becoming an Astronaut. That dream kept me focused and, more importantly, it kept me in school. So, I know the impact that having a dream can have on your life. That’s why I tell kids to have the courage to dream their dreams and then be willing to pursue it with a lot of hard work.” - Wendy Lawrence

2025 GOLD AWARD

HIGHLIGHTING WENDY LAWRENCE

ASTRONAUT WENDY B. LAWRENCE IS THE RECIPIENT OF THE SECOND ANNUAL GOLD ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARD, PRESENTED AS PART OF NATIONAL ASTRONAUT DAY, IN RECOGNITION OF HER OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING STEM AND STEAM EDUCATION. A TRAILBLAZER IN BOTH NAVAL AVIATION AND SPACE EXPLORATION, WENDY HAS MADE IT HER MISSION TO INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF EXPLORERS, SCIENTISTS, AND ENGINEERS. FROM HER EARLY DAYS AS A TRAILBLAZING NAVAL AVIATOR, TO HER CRITICAL ROLES IN HISTORIC SHUTTLE-MIR AND INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION MISSIONS AS AN ASTRONAUT, WENDY HAS CONSISTENTLY EMBODIED THE SPIRIT OF EXPLORATION, INNOVATION, AND SERVICE.

WENDY HAS LONG BEEN A CHAMPION OF EDUCATION. HER TIME AS A PHYSICS INSTRUCTOR AT THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY AND LATER AS A PROMINENT ADVOCATE FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION REFLECTS HER DEEP BELIEF IN EMPOWERING YOUNG MINDS. WHETHER MENTORING STUDENTS, LEADING OUTREACH INITIATIVES, OR WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO SUPPORT ASTRONAUT TRAINING, SHE BRINGS A PASSION FOR TEACHING AND A COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY IN STEM THAT CONTINUES TO IMPACT COUNTLESS LIVES. HER JOURNEY SHOWS STUDENTS THAT THERE'S A PLACE FOR THEM IN THE WORLD OF SPACE AND SCIENCE.

THE GOLD ASTRONAUT ROCK STAR AWARD HONORS THOSE ACTIVELY SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SPACE EXPLORATION BY NURTURING THE INNOVATORS OF TOMORROW, AND WENDY LAWRENCE EXEMPLIFIES THAT MISSION. WENDY HAS TURNED HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE INTO A POWERFUL PLATFORM FOR EDUCATION, AND HAS MADE AN ENDURING IMPACT ON THE FUTURE BY INSPIRING THE NEXT GEN OF EXPLORERS, PROVING THAT REACHING THE STARS BEGINS WITH LIGHTING THE SPARK OF CURIOSITY HERE ON EARTH.

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