

SALLY RIDE

b. May 26, 1951

d. July 23, 2012

NATIONAL HERO

*“Young girls need to see role models.
You can’t be what you can’t see.”*

**On June 18, 1983,
Sally Ride became
the first American
woman in space.**

Sally Ride was the first female American astronaut in space.

Born in Los Angeles, Ride excelled in science and sports. She was a nationally ranked junior tennis player and earned a tennis scholarship to a private high school. While playing in college, she got the attention of Billie Jean King, who encouraged Ride to play professionally. Ride decided to finish her education.

Ride earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in physics from Stanford. She responded to a NASA recruiting ad and was one of 35 people—including six women—chosen from more than 8,000 applicants.

Ride was selected as a mission specialist aboard the space shuttle Challenger. On June 18, 1983, she became the first American woman in space. She later became the only person to serve on the presidential commissions investigating both of the nation’s space shuttle tragedies—the Challenger explosion (1986) and the Columbia disaster (2003).

In 1987, Ride retired from NASA and became a science fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford. In 1989, she 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 Sally Ride Science, which motivates girls and boys to study science and

explore careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Ride co-authored several books about space and about climate change with Tam O’Shaughnessy, her life partner of 27 years.

In 2013, Ride posthumously received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama.



© ASSOCIATED PRESS

