

Collins, Eileen Encyclopedia Article

Collins, Eileen

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Collins, Eileen

Eileen Collins became the first female shuttle commander in 1995.

American Shuttle Commander, Pilot, and Mathematician 1956-

Space shuttle Columbia (STS-93) lifted off in July 1999 under the command of Eileen Collins, the first woman shuttle commander. Collins graduated from the Air Force Undergraduate Pilot Training program at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma in 1979 and remained there as a T-38 instructor pilot until 1982. She then moved to Travis Air Force Base in Colorado, where she was a C-141 aircraft commander and instructor pilot until 1985.

From 1986 to 1989, Collins was an assistant professor of mathematics and a T-41 instructor pilot at the U.S. Air Force Academy. She received two master's degrees during that period: a master of science in operations research from Stanford University in 1986 and a master of arts in space systems management from Webster University in 1989.

Collins became a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut in 1991. She has worked in mission control as a spacecraft communicator (CAPCOM) and served as chief of the Shuttle Branch at NASA Johnson Space Center. She became the first woman pilot of the space shuttle when she flew on STS-63 in 1995; that mission marked the first shuttle rendezvous with the Russian space station Mir. Collins returned to Mir a second time as the pilot of STS-84 in 1997, followed by STS-93 in 1999, when as shuttle commander she oversaw the deployment of the Chandra X-Ray Telescope.

See Also

Career Astronauts (Volume 1);; History of Humans in Space (Volume 3);; Mir (Volume 3);; Space Shuttle (Volume 3);; Women in Space (Volume 3).

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Internet Resources

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