

# Generations of STEM: Ellen Ochoa

## First Hispanic Woman in Space

Ms. Ochoa was working at the NASA Ames Research center on Optical Systems when selected by NASA in 1991 to fly on the Space Shuttle *Discovery* in 1993, making her the first Hispanic woman in space. She flew four missions totaling nearly 1,000 hours in space and operated the Remote Manipulator

System, robotically deploying and capturing satellites. Later, she worked in Mission Control during the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster. Ellen went on to retire from spacecraft operations and became the first Hispanic and second female director of the Johnson Space Center.

Growing up, Ellen was very interested in music and considered it for a major in college. She is a classically trained flautist, and actually brought a flute with her on her first mission in space. Her love of math led her to choose physics as a major, which has been a huge influence in her work in optics, a discipline in which she holds four patents. Currently, she is Vice Chair of the National Science Board for the 2018–2020 term.



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