

Generations of STEM:

John Herrington

Chickasaw Astronaut

Born in Oklahoma, John was raised as a member of the Chickasaw tribe. He grew up in Colorado, Wyoming, and finally Texas where he graduated high school. His first attempt at college was unsuccessful, but he returned later and received a degree in applied math.

After joining the Navy, he fulfilled his dream to become a pilot, serving as a Patrol Plane Commander, Mission Commander, Patrol Plane Instructor, and even as a test pilot. He earned a Master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School.

In 1996, he was selected as an astronaut and completed two years of training and testing. When he visited the International Space Station, he became the first Native American to walk in space. John has logged over 330 hours (almost two weeks) in space and over 19 hours in Extra-Vehicular Activity (spacewalk). He honored his cultural background by carrying representations of native culture on his walk, including a Chickasaw flag and traditional flute.

He has also bicycled from Washington state to Florida, spent ten days underwater in the NEEMO 6 lab, and has written a [children's book](#) with Chickasaw vocabulary.



Image Source: [NASA](#). Information Sources: [Wikipedia](#), [Oklahoma Historical Society](#), [American Indian Education Fund](#)