

Generations of STEM:

Mae Carol Jemison

Astronaut

The daughter of an elementary school teacher and a roofer, Jemison was raised in Chicago where her parents moved from Alabama to provide a better education. She loved science from an early age and graduated from Stanford with a degree in chemical engineering. She went on to medical school and worked as a physician in the Peace Corps in Africa.



Inspired by Sally Ride, Jemison applied to NASA in 1985, but NASA paused accepting new applicants after the Space Shuttle *Challenger* disaster. She reapplied in 1987 and began training as an astronaut. In 1992, Jemison flew aboard the Space Shuttle *Endeavour*, making her the first African-American woman in space. Her mission focused on various life science experiments, including raising tadpoles in zero gravity, and her own study of bone cells. After her return, she appeared in an episode of *Star Trek*, a show that served as an early inspiration for her love of science. Outside of her NASA career, Jemison has followed her lifelong passion for various styles of dance, building her own home dance studio. She has also written several children's books, and is an official LEGO minifigure.

Image Source: [Wikipedia / NASA](#) Information Sources: [National Women's History Museum](#), [Britannica](#), [Biography.com](#)