Recently we had the pleasure to speak with two space pioneers legends both on and off the screen.

Nichelle Nichols and George Takei have been outspoken advocates for greater diversity in exploration and have leverage their fictional personas as Commander Nyota Uhura and Captain Hikaru Sulu in Star Trek to help our field grow and become stronger.

Nichelle, starting with the space shuttle program you helped NASA actively recruit astronauts of color for the first time as one of the people to benefit from your work could you please tell us how that came about and what you did.

John Yardley requested my help because NASA knew how much our space program meant to me and how much I cared about making our space program more inclusive.

As an Asian in a prominent role often entrusted with huge responsibilities
Sulu broke new ground
did you see yourself as a role model?
Well at that time I was just happy to be
doing Star Trek when I got cast I knew
that this was first of all personally
fantastic opportunity to be playing a
character who was a part of the
leadership team speaking without an
accent boldly going where no one had
gone before you know but at the same
time it was I was mindful of the fact
that as an Asian-American I was
a representative figure. Dr. King told me
that I could not leave I thought would
you talking about Dr. Martin Luther King but
what I really said was "why?". He said the
show whether you like it or not you've
become a symbol. If you leave they can
replace you and it will be like you were
never there,
what you accomplished for all of us will
only be real if you stay.