



*Women's
History Month*

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00:00:14,080 --> 00:00:18,240

Women at NASA are making history every day\h
by contributing to groundbreaking missions\h\h

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and projects in the areas of space science\h
and aeronautics. They're also dedicated to\h\h

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inspiring the next generation of explorers to\h
break new boundaries. We're celebrating women's\h\h

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history month by recognizing their stories\h
and contributions to exploration and beyond.\h\h

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Hello my name is Alana Roche' and I'm honored\h
to introduce you to Laurie Grindle. Hi Laurie.\h\h

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Hi Alana. How are you today? I'm great how are\h
you? Thank you so much for joining us. I'm glad to\h\h

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be here thanks for having me. I wanted to see if\h
you could tell us briefly about your work for NASA\h\h

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and when you first knew you wanted to join\h
the agency? Okay well um I've had quite\h\h

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a few different positions while I've been\h
working for NASA. So I started full-time in\h\h

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1993. So I've been here for a little bit and over\h
that time I transitioned from being an engineer\h\h

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to even a chief engineer to a project manager\h
and then am now the director for programs and\h\h

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projects. So a lot of diversity of experiences\h
but also a lot of diversity in responsibilities\h\h

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but I've enjoyed it very much. I guess my position\h
right now is more of a managerial one in terms of\h\h

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managing the the directorate and all the project\h
managers that work for me and for the center. But\h\h

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uh when did i want to join NASA and when did i\h
know that? I pretty much always wanted to work\h\h

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for NASA. My father got his pilot's license the\h
year that I was born and so I was always kind of\h\h

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flying around or around airplanes uh from the\h
very beginning. So I really liked airplanes\h\h

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and then I was also really excited about the\h
space program and thought that was really\h\h

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exciting. So how could I not work for a place\h
that embodies both of those interests in the\h\h

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00:02:11,920 --> 00:02:17,840
National Aeronautics and Space Administration so\h
I was pretty pretty sure that NASA was where i was\h\h

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headed from a very young age. Have you ever had to
overcome any challenges to get where you are today?

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So this is a topic that I um talk about a lot with
my parents. So my parents were born in the 30s and

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in the south and so for them lots and lots
of challenges and then went on to become

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professionals. So I have experienced no challenges
like theirs uh by any means but the um you know

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the usual challenges that people face when you
want to do do things and be successful at them.

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So that need to demonstrate that you're capable of
doing a job and you know get your foot in the door

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by making that that case to people by showing
what you can do and then needing to continue

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to reinforce that so you can keep the job. Those
are the kinds of challenges that I've had.

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But nothing that rises to what people
traditionally mean when they say you know have you

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experienced any challenges. Makes sense. Share with
us any female role models who have inspired you.

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Sure uh so those usual kind of pioneers\h
right in aviation so like Amelia Earhart.\h\h

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Bessie Coleman also uh Sally Ride uh because I\h
like I said I also like the space program. So Sally\h\h

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Ride actually went to the same high school that\h
I went to uh so that um really made a difference.\h\h

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A few years before me but that made\h
a difference for me too because now\h\h

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it's someone who has actually kind of walked in\h
my shoes a little bit. And so having the ability to\h\h

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see that that person then be able to go on to do\h
great things. Maybe it's possible that i could do\h\h

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you know similar things. When I got uh to what\h
was then Dryden um Dryden Flight Research Center.\h\h

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Marta Bohn- Meyer became uh one of those kind of\h
inspirational sort of role models for me because\h\h

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she was a pilot and an engineer and a project\h
manager. So again another person that's sort\h\h

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of nearby that I can look at and say hey I could\h
do I could do things like that too. So um but the\h\h

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biggest role model for me has always been my mom.\h
So she is a United States district court judge\h\h

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um and uh was appointed by President Carter.\h
And so uh there's a person you know just right\h\h

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next door who is breaking barriers every single\h
day. And so for me that really told me what was\h\h

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potentially possible for me different\h
field obviously but just the fact that\h\h

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if she could do those things and maybe there\h
was a chance for me to be able to do something\h\h

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exciting as well. A lot of the women you mentioned\h
wear a lot of different hats in their job.\h\h

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I know you do too. What's your favorite part\h
of your job? For me it's all the projects I've\h\h

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worked on. It's been the project team that's been\h
the most exciting part of it because of the way\h\h

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we come together and work together to solve a\h
common problem so I really enjoy that aspect.\h\h

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I kind of think of it as like the power of\h
teamwork so for example on the X-43a project when\h\h

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I started that project i was just an aerodynamics\h
researcher. We had our first flight there\h\h

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and it did not go well. It did nothing nothing\h
happened as we would have expected it to uh and\h\h

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uh it resulted in loss of the vehicle and a mishap\h
investigation. But the whole team although that\h\h

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was very discouraging the whole team was really\h
passionate about wanting to know what happened\h\h

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what caused this how can we recover from it. And\h
so the whole team kind of rallied together to\h\h

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figure out the answers and work closely with the\h
mishap investigation board to find those answers.\h\h

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And then um once we had that then we actually went\h
through to work towards actually recovering from\h\h

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it and returning to flight. And so you know we even\h
our process was so diligent and thorough that we\h\h

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even found problems that we had not experienced\h
in that first flight but would have bit us\h\h

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if we had not repaired them. So we even were able\h
to find things that were later on in the mission.\h\h

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So the way the team all came together worked so\h
hard get the answers and then solve the problems\h\h

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and actually fix them in returns\h
to flight were rewarded with that\h\h

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by having a very very successful second\h
flight that did everything we wanted it to do.\h\h

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And what does women's history month mean to\h
you? I think of it as an opportunity to really\h\h

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uh celebrate the accomplishments of women and\h
uh also to make sure people know who they are.\h\h

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So what you know these are great women who\h
have done things that have really advanced\h\h

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uh the path forward for all women behind them.\h
And so women's history month is really an\h\h

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opportunity to celebrate those achievements and\h
then also show future generations what's possible.\h\h

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And what is your perspective on how the role of\h
women in STEM has changed throughout your career?\h\h

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In the past what we've seen is um you know a lack\h
of that encouragement and so there weren't as many\h\h

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people for sure there weren't as many women from
from the perspective of women feeling like or

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being told that there were traditional roles for
them. And so uh what i have seen of course through

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my career is more and more women all the time
every year there's more than there were before

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and i think that's really great. So I kind of see
STEM fields as being potentially more inclusive

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than some of the other fields out there
for that reason and so when I look at

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uh and hear stories like um about our female
computers uh right or like in like the movie

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Hidden Figures of the book Hidden Figures.
I think well maybe that's some of how those

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barriers could really be broken down. Because
they had the skills they demonstrated those

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skills that those skills were in demand. So yep
you could produce these numbers and so we want you

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and at a time when things weren't necessarily
as inclusive across the board not only for

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uh you know African Americans but also you know just women in general as well. So um

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was at work on Friday and I walked I was walking up down the first floor hallway

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of 4800 and looking at all of our historical pictures that we have there

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I was really thinking about that about the female computers that we had even here

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00:08:45,120 --> 00:08:52,960
um and how how they paved the way for others to follow. So thank you and thank you so much

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for your time today Laurie. I know this is going to inspire other women. March is Women's History Month

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and we're going to be celebrating all month long. If you could just give us a follow on all of our

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NASA Armstrong social media accounts it is @NASAArmstrong and you can follow along