



1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:04,120  
(MUSIC)

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00:00:04,120 --> 00:00:07,300  
Billie Fitzgerald, former secretary to Dr. Kurt Debus, Kennedy Space Center's first center director: In later years

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00:00:07,300 --> 00:00:12,820  
came down and had a meeting in that office, and I was taking the minutes,

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00:00:12,820 --> 00:00:19,390  
and right in the middle of the meeting, one of the engineers stopped the meeting and decided that I should

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00:00:19,390 --> 00:00:26,610  
be excused because, since I was a woman, I might go outside the room and tell what they were talking about.

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00:00:26,610 --> 00:00:34,880  
Well they were talking about von Braun going to Washington to try to get money to put a man on the moon.

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00:00:34,880 --> 00:00:39,590  
And of course Dr. Debus, as he always did, came to my defense. He was very protective.

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00:00:39,590 --> 00:00:43,110  
He always treated me like a daughter. I was very young then.

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00:00:43,110 --> 00:00:51,850  
So he treated me like a daughter, and it was kind of subtle that I would stay in there and take the minutes.

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00:00:51,850 --> 00:00:58,080  
I just looked at all of them and I said, "Hey if you think I'm going outside this room and tell anybody

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00:00:58,080 --> 00:01:03,880  
you're going to try to send a man to the moon, forget it! People would think I'm crazy."

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00:01:03,880 --> 00:01:42,340  
(MUSIC)

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00:01:42,340 --> 00:01:49,720

Woman's voice: I made boxing gloves before I came here, and the fact is, I was an experienced sewer,

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00:01:49,720 --> 00:01:55,270

but I had to learn all over again. Where I'd sewed before you just sewed on a

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00:01:55,270 --> 00:02:02,670

production line, and this here is quality more than quantity.

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00:02:02,670 --> 00:02:08,470

Narrator: Fifty years ago, America's space program was just beginning to lift off.

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00:02:08,470 --> 00:02:13,160

At the same time, here on Earth, women across the country were boldly venturing into

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00:02:13,160 --> 00:02:18,220

new territory by entering the workforce like never before.

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00:02:18,220 --> 00:02:22,060

Male Voice: TM blockhouse what are your cameras and tape recorders at this time?

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00:02:22,060 --> 00:02:24,040

Joyce Riquelme, Manager, Center Planning and Development Office: When I first started working out here,

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00:02:24,040 --> 00:02:33,490

there weren't a lot of women in any sort of technical position. Most of the women were secretaries or clerks of s

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00:02:33,490 --> 00:02:38,860

When I first hired on, I was one woman, the only woman, in a group of 23 male

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00:02:38,860 --> 00:02:44,050

engineers, and so it was a unique environment.

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00:02:44,050 --> 00:02:48,030

Janet Karika, Director of Interagency Launch Programs: I look back on what it was like when I first came in,

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00:02:48,030 --> 00:02:53,090

and the women that came before me, although I didn't know many of them I got to know them later,

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00:02:53,090 --> 00:03:00,990

they pretty much had to be men. You couldn't be married, you couldn't have kids, and still do what you loved.

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00:03:00,990 --> 00:03:08,150

They had to make some really tough choices to blaze those trails.

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00:03:08,150 --> 00:03:12,210

Narrator: As NASA sent missions to the moon, launched the space shuttle and built the

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00:03:12,210 --> 00:03:19,280

International Space Station, women were blazing new trails.

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00:03:19,280 --> 00:03:22,200

Mike Curie, NASA Launch Commentator: And she's also very enthusiastic and ready to fly.

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00:03:22,200 --> 00:03:24,580

Karika: Early on in my career, I mean, there were no female

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00:03:24,580 --> 00:03:29,110

generals that had families or even were married, and that's changing now.

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00:03:29,110 --> 00:03:34,380

Some of my girlfriends now are two and three star generals and some have families.

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00:03:34,380 --> 00:03:38,080

Clara Wright, Materials Engineer: I mean, now we have women who are senior managers, so we have,

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00:03:38,080 --> 00:03:43,880

I have, my generation has role models to look up to whereas maybe women before didn't.

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00:03:43,880 --> 00:03:45,910

Charlie Blackwell-Thompson, Chief, Processing and Operations Division: I look at during my career, Eileen

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00:03:45,910 --> 00:03:51,850

Collins, first women pilot, four years later first women commander. Again another affirmation that

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00:03:51,850 --> 00:04:09,920

whatever you want to do, it's possible if you commit to it.

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00:04:09,920 --> 00:04:20,370

Launch Commentator: ...and lift off ...lift off of STS-7 and America's first woman astronaut. And the shuttle has

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00:04:20,370 --> 00:04:23,900

Narrator: The contributions and accomplishments of the women at Kennedy Space Center

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00:04:23,900 --> 00:04:27,940

continued to make an indelible mark on American space flight.

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00:04:27,940 --> 00:04:31,210

Curie: Kennedy Space Center native Nicole Stott, who worked here

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00:04:31,210 --> 00:04:39,130

processing shuttles for many years before becoming an astronaut.

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00:04:39,130 --> 00:04:46,820

Narrator: Now, the story of women rising into the professional ranks is interwoven into our nation's space legac

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00:04:46,820 --> 00:04:48,070

Riquelme: Quite a lot has changed.

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00:04:48,070 --> 00:05:08,640

Yeah, it's a very different place now than it was when I first began about 32 years ago here at KSC.

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00:05:08,640 --> 00:05:12,770

Kimberlyn Carter, Chief, Business Office, Information Technology: Thank you for not giving up.

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00:05:12,770 --> 00:05:21,910

Thank you for fighting and overcoming those obstacles that were, I believe, much

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00:05:21,910 --> 00:05:28,950

more apparent and much harder than they are for me right now.

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00:05:28,950 --> 00:05:31,710

Blackwell-Thompson: And so, when comes to what all's

