



NICHELLE NICHOLS

WOMAN ON A NASA MISSION

1

00:00:09,840 --> 00:00:12,560

I first learned about Star Trek through my mom.

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00:00:12,560 --> 00:00:15,280

She and her three sisters used to rush home to

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00:00:15,280 --> 00:00:18,240

watch the original Star Trek
because of Nichelle Nichols.

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00:00:18,240 --> 00:00:23,520

They really enjoyed seeing someone who looked like
themselves portraying a character on TV like that.

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00:00:24,400 --> 00:00:29,200

I loved everything about science fiction
shows, the whole idea of exploring space.

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00:00:29,200 --> 00:00:33,760

So that's why I decided to become an engineer and
that was my aspiration to ultimately work for NASA.

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00:00:34,320 --> 00:00:38,880

Hi, I'm Nichelle Nichols, but I still feel
a little bit like Lieutenant Uhura

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00:00:38,880 --> 00:00:40,960

on the starship Enterprise.

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00:00:40,960 --> 00:00:46,320

In 1977, NASA hired Nichelle Nichols to
help recruit the Space Shuttle astronauts.

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00:00:47,440 --> 00:00:50,480

She actually gave a speech that
year for the National Space

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00:00:50,480 --> 00:00:53,760

Institute on the humanizing of space.

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00:00:53,760 --> 00:00:58,800

She asked, "Where are my people?" who she was referring to women and minorities.

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00:00:59,360 --> 00:01:03,120

NASA, of course, heard about the speech and invited her to NASA headquarters.

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00:01:03,120 --> 00:01:05,760

Jim Fletcher was then the NASA Administrator,

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00:01:05,760 --> 00:01:10,880

and he asked Nichelle Nichols if she would be interested in serving as a spokesperson

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00:01:10,880 --> 00:01:16,080

or an ambassador for NASA and help them recruit the first class of Space Shuttle astronauts.

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00:01:17,280 --> 00:01:18,560

This is your NASA.

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00:01:19,440 --> 00:01:25,840

A space agency embarked on a mission to improve the quality of life on planet Earth right now.

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00:01:26,880 --> 00:01:31,680

Not only did she portray a technical character in a time period where you

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00:01:31,680 --> 00:01:36,720

didn't see a lot of women or people of color in technical roles on television.

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00:01:36,720 --> 00:01:40,560

She symbolized to so many what was possible.

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00:01:41,120 --> 00:01:46,080

What I love about Nichelle Nichols is how she embraced the role and

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00:01:46,640 --> 00:01:55,600
how she portrayed us and gave us that roadmap
for the future generation of women to follow.

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00:01:55,600 --> 00:01:58,720
We definitely need more
characters like Uhura today.

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00:01:58,720 --> 00:02:04,080
There's still just something special about
seeing people who look like yourself portraying

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00:02:04,080 --> 00:02:09,200
the kinds of things that you might one day be
able to do in the world, especially for kids.

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00:02:09,200 --> 00:02:13,040
You just embed in their minds,
even in an unconscious way,

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00:02:13,040 --> 00:02:18,160
this idea that they really do have
a whole world of options out there

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00:02:18,160 --> 00:02:23,360
because if they're told something but they don't
see it, it doesn't really sink in as being real.

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00:02:23,920 --> 00:02:27,280
Nichelle, I want to personally thank you

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00:02:27,920 --> 00:02:33,840
for is inspiring me to be part
of this space exploration career.

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00:02:33,840 --> 00:02:38,160
This is Mike Hopkins with
Crew-1, and we just wanted to

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00:02:38,160 --> 00:02:40,640
to say how much you inspired\h
us as we were growing up.

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00:02:40,640 --> 00:02:42,240
You taught us how to dream.

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00:02:42,240 --> 00:02:44,160
Thanks for your wonderful work.

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00:02:44,160 --> 00:02:48,400
Seeing your continued drive and\h
enthusiasm to inspire young kids today,\h\h

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00:02:48,400 --> 00:02:50,080
that still is inspiring me.

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00:02:50,080 --> 00:02:54,080
Your legacy led to our legacy\h
here, and we appreciate it.

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00:02:54,080 --> 00:02:57,680
Thank you for making a difference for all of us.

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00:02:57,680 --> 00:02:58,837
Live long and prosper.

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00:02:59,920 --> 00:03:06,240
The shuttle will be taking scientists and\h
engineers, men and women of all races into\h\h

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00:03:06,240 --> 00:03:12,160
space just like the astronaut crew on\h
the starship Enterprise so that is why\h\h