Women Of NASA

(NOT what you would have expected!)

At first look, and maybe even the second, you might wonder what a Science Fiction woman might have to do with the real astronaut adjacent to her photo.

And now, the rest of the story---

Gene Rodenberry selected Nichelle Nichols to represent the first woman of mind and responsibility to the deck of the USS Enterprise in Star Trek. Until then women were simply window dressing, with roles of damsels in distress as was Jean Rogers as Dale Arden in the first serials of "Flash Gordon". Other women were the daughters of scientists. But Nichole's character was the communications officer.

After the first season, Nichole wanted to leave Star Trek for Broadway, but Martin Luther King cajoled her into staying on as a role model.

When Nichols made a speech at an NAACP meeting in Washington DC, lamenting the fact that NASA continued to turn down applications of women and minorities, two NASA officials were in the audience. They asked her to come to NASA the following morning where they asked her to work for NASA in the role of recruiting minority and women as astronauts. Flabbergasted, Nichole agreed. One of her first recruits was Sally Ride. She found about a dozen qualified people including African-American Charles Bolden who later became a NASA Administrator.

She also recruited Mae Jamison an African-American woman who later had a small part in one of the Star Trek episodes.