



26.06.2023 Whole School Assembly: Katherine Johnson

We like to come into assembly to different genres of music. Today, at the request of Miss Thackrah, it was 90's dance!

Today's assembly was inspired by the great Katherine Johnson. She achieved something great. But what?



Once the children had predicted what they thought Katherine Johnson had achieved, we watched the following video about her:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-XKi9D2dtU&t=148s>

Katherine Johnson was a pioneering mathematician. Overcoming incredible odds to lead the world in her field. She was born on August 26, 1918, in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia and made significant contributions to the early years of the United States space program.

Katherine Johnson's notable achievements include:

- **Human Computer:** Katherine Johnson began her career as a "human computer" at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which later became NASA. In this role, she performed complex mathematical calculations by hand to analyze data related to aeronautics and aerospace research.
- **Critical Calculations for Space Travel:** Johnson's exceptional mathematical skills and expertise in celestial navigation made her an essential figure in the early days of the U.S. space program. She calculated the trajectory for Alan Shepard, the first American in space, and John Glenn, the first American to orbit the Earth.
- **Apollo Lunar Program:** Johnson's work also extended to the Apollo program, where she helped calculate the flight paths for missions to the Moon. Her contributions were instrumental in ensuring the success and safety of these missions.
- **Presidential Medal of Freedom:** In 2015, Katherine Johnson was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour in the United States, for her groundbreaking



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contributions to space exploration and her trailblazing role as an African American woman in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

- Legacy: Katherine Johnson's legacy extends beyond her individual accomplishments. She served as an inspiration to countless individuals, particularly women and people of colour, to pursue careers in science and mathematics. Her story gained broader recognition through the book "Hidden Figures" by Margot Lee Shetterly, which was later adapted into a popular film of the same name.

Katherine Johnson's work not only contributed to the success of the early space program but also challenged racial and gender barriers in the field of mathematics and science. She remains an iconic figure in the history of space exploration and a symbol of the importance of diversity and inclusion in STEM fields.

Thank you to our governor Ms Magaya for her help with our assembly.

