First woman astronaut speaks about shuttle
By Debbie Silverstein

Feature

Astronaut Sally K. Ride, the first American woman in space, presented a "home movie" of her 1984 shuttle flight last Thursday. The lecture was sponsored by the Lecture Series Committee (LSC). Ride narrated a 20-minute film made of shots taken during her second flight. "It turns out astronauts are really a lot like tourists. We get into the space shuttle and all we want to do is take pictures," she said.

Ride first entered orbit on the flight of Challenger 2, the seventh shuttle mission, in June 1984. But "I've had to talk so much about that first flight," Ride said, "that I'm tired of it and all you're going to hear about my first flight."

Ride's second mission on Oct. 1, 1984, was dedicated to geological science, and included an ecologist and a Canadian astronaut in addition to the five American astronauts. It was the first shuttle mission to carry a Canadian astronaut and the first with a fly-to-two female astronauts.

The flight was the second to land at Kennedy Space Center in Florida instead of Edwards Air Force Base in California.

The flight is the chronicled mission from the breakfast before the launch through touchdown. It featured shots from most aspects of the mission, including a silent launch, a space walk by two of the astronauts and many pictures of the earth. Ride spoke about the mission:

- The most around the landing strip is a Kennedy Space Center television reservation and a film with astronauts. She said Ride said, "I've had to talk so much about that first flight, that I'm tired of it and all you're going to hear about my first flight."

- The way astronauts orient the camera to the cable "edges" that face the course of the mission due to weightlessness. Most crew members keep themselves perpendicular to the Earth at the beginning of the mission. But after several days in zero gravity, "people are everywhere and always have a sense of g."" The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) uses 21 738 jet aircraft to maintain the astronauts' flying proficiency. Shuttle crew members are informally taught how to fly the airplanes as they gain proficiency in navigation and communication. Also, all astronauts are allowed to use the airplanes for travel as well as training.

Ride became an astronaut in 1978. She was chosen from an applicant pool NASA developed to meet the personnel needs of the then-new shuttle space program. She became a member of the first group of astronauts selected since the mid-1960s. The first six women in the astronaut program were among the 15 astronaut-pilot lots and 26 astronaut-scientists accepted in Ride's class.

The current NASA astronaut selection criteria, according to Ride, require the applicant to be healthy, have eyesight correctable to 20/20, be between 5' and 6' 5" and have a Bachelor's degree in math, engineering or science. Neither superior fitness nor graduate or post-graduate education is required, she said, but a graduate degree is helpful.

Ride has a PhD in physics from Stanford University, with concentrations in astrophysics and free electron laser research. NASA provides scientist-astronauts with the option of continuing research in their fields, Ride said. But since joining the space shuttle program, she no longer actively works solely in these fields.

A representative of LSC reported that 437 people attended Ride's lecture.

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