

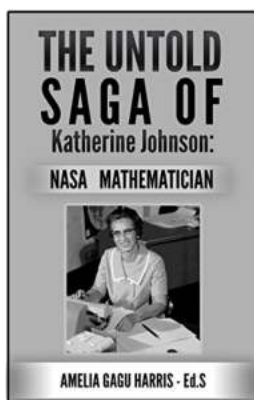
# The Untold Saga Of Katherine Johnson: NASA Mathematician

The world of science and technology has seen countless contributors who have left an indelible mark on human progress. Among these luminaries, Katherine Johnson, an African-American mathematician, broke barriers at NASA and played a significant role in the American space program during the Space Race.

## Early Life and Education

Katherine Johnson was born on August 26, 1918, in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, at a time when African Americans faced severe racial discrimination. Despite the challenges, her passion for numbers bloomed at a young age. Recognizing her exceptional mathematical abilities, her teachers and family encouraged and supported her academic pursuits.

After completing high school, Johnson pursued her higher education at West Virginia State College, which provided higher education opportunities for African Americans at the time. She graduated summa cum laude in 1937 with degrees in Mathematics and French. Her remarkable achievements didn't stop there.



## THE UNTOLD SAGA OF KATHERINE JOHNSON - NASA MATHEMATICIAN: "HUMAN COMPUTER"

by Amelia Gagu Harris (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 5321 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 22 pages



## Integration into the Space Program

In 1953, Johnson began her journey as a research mathematician at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), which later became NASA. During her early years at NACA, she performed complex calculations by hand, analyzing data from flight tests and real-world experiments. Her attention to detail and accuracy gained her the reputation of being one of the most meticulous mathematicians in the agency.

However, Katherine Johnson's contributions to NASA soared when she joined the Space Task Group in 1958. This elite team was responsible for carrying out human spaceflight research and was an integral part of the Mercury program, America's first manned space program.

## The Hidden Figures of NASA

Katherine Johnson's untold saga only came to the forefront when the book "Hidden Figures" by Margot Lee Shetterly was published in 2016. The book highlighted the remarkable achievements of African-American women, including Johnson, who played pivotal roles at NASA during the Space Race.

Johnson's mathematical expertise was crucial in calculating the trajectory for Alan Shepard, the first American to travel into space, during the Freedom 7 mission in 1961. Her calculations were instrumental in ensuring Shepard's safe return to Earth. Johnson's contributions continued to shape the future of space exploration.

## A Legacy of Excellence

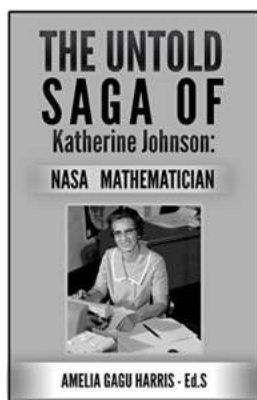
Katherine Johnson worked at NASA for 33 years until her retirement in 1986. Throughout her career, she received numerous accolades for her exceptional work, including the NASA Lunar Orbiter Award and the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Johnson's contributions also extended beyond her work as a mathematician. She actively advocated for diversity and equal rights within NASA and inspired generations of young women and people of color to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

Despite the long-overdue recognition of Katherine Johnson's achievements, her story continues to inspire millions worldwide. Through her dedication and brilliance, she shattered barriers and paved the way for future generations of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians.

## Closing Thoughts

The untold saga of Katherine Johnson, the NASA mathematician, reminds us of the importance of inclusivity and diversity in the pursuit of knowledge and progress. Her extraordinary contributions to the American space program opened doors for many and changed the course of history. Johnson's story serves as a timeless testament to the power of determination, intelligence, and breaking down barriers for a better future.



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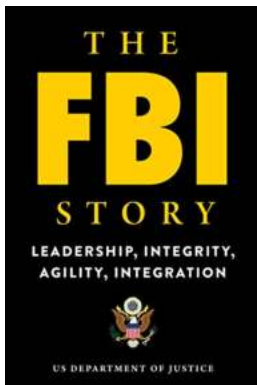


This book is to encourage women to follow subjects like Mathematics and Science and not to be intimidated by the idea that men are more capable of STEM fields ("STEM" is shorthand for "science, technology, engineering and mathematics") than women. Studies show that in elementary schools, both sexes are the same, but as the students' progress to middle and high schools, disparity becomes evident. Foreign born American parents encourage their children to excel in STEM programs. My brother's daughter is a medical doctor, she excelled in STEM programs, my son is a mechanical engineer, and he excelled in STEM programs. My brother was the first African to earn a Nuclear Physics Masters and doctoral degree.

The home is the first institution of learning. We need to encourage our girls to build their self-esteem at home so that they can be able to fight the system when it discourages them to follow their hearts. I had a college professor who talked about me and my capabilities so bad, for a minute I doubted myself. I had to encourage myself and rise above the criticism. I did not graduate with a doctoral degree, but I had two degrees from South Africa, two degrees from America and two certifications from both countries. I had to learn to encourage myself in the midst of this college professor talking about me like I was not capable of being a doctoral candidate. I was two classes shy of completing my course work.

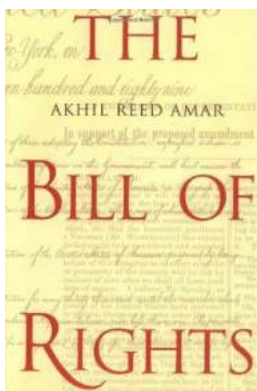
Katherine Johnson is a trailblazer, she achieved all her accolades long before women were even capable of finishing high school because her parents saw the gift in her and they encouraged her to be the best.

I grew up in South Africa where some parents believed that it is not wise to educate women, because they are going to get married and the spouse will benefit from all the hard work that the parents have done. My father did not receive formal education; my mother went as far as eighth grade, which was like high school back then. He made up his mind that he was going to educate his children, both boys and girls will have similar short at education, so that we can be able to take care of ourselves, not to rely on a man to take care of us. My father was ridiculed by his friends, but at the end, he was the hero, when they saw us graduate from prestigious high schools and colleges. By the way, African parents had to pay for all their children's education; there was no free education, no scholarships for them because of the racism (Apartheid, a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race and color) that prevailed in South Africa.



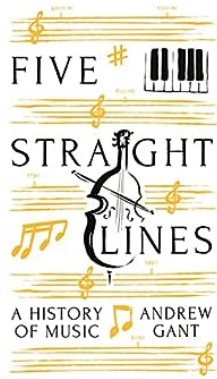
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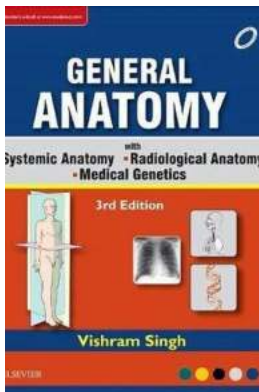
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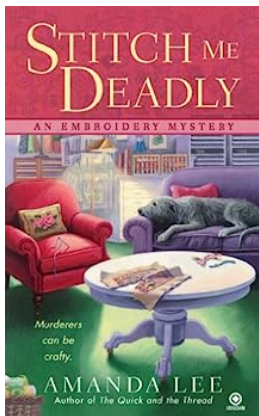
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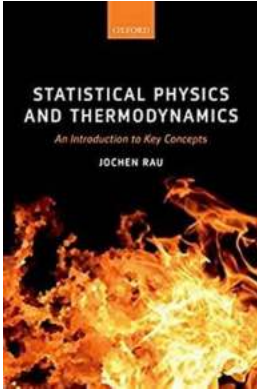
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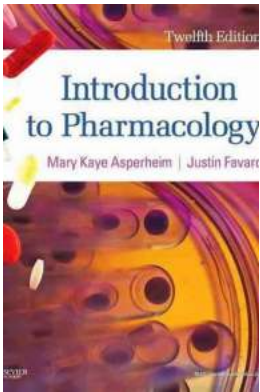
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