



Kalpana Chawla

S.S. Kalpana Chawla

NG-14 Cargo Delivery Mission to the International Space Station

Northrop Grumman is proud to name the NG-14 Cygnus spacecraft after former astronaut Kalpana Chawla. It is the company's tradition to name each Cygnus after an individual who has played a pivotal role in human spaceflight. Chawla was selected in honor of her prominent place in history as the first woman of Indian descent to go to space.

Kalpana Chawla was born in Karnal, Haryana, India on March 17, 1962. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in aeronautical engineering from Punjab Engineering College in India in 1982. Chawla then moved to the United States to pursue her graduate education; in 1984 she received a Master's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Texas, and a Ph.D. in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado in 1988. She held commercial pilot's licenses for single- and multi-engine airplanes, seaplanes and gliders, and was also a certified flight instructor.

Chawla began her career at NASA in 1988 as a powered-lift computational fluid dynamics researcher at the Ames Research Center in California. Her work concentrated on the simulation of complex air flows encountered by aircraft flying in "ground-effect." In 1993, Chawla joined Overset Methods Inc. as vice president and a researcher in aerodynamics.

After becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in April 1991, Chawla applied for the NASA astronauts corps. She was selected in December 1994, and reported to the Johnson Space Center in Houston in 1995 as an astronaut candidate in Group 15. In November 1996, Chawla was assigned as a mission specialist on STS-87 aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia, becoming the first woman of Indian descent to fly in space.

Chawla's second spaceflight experience came in 2001 when she was selected for the crew of STS-107. The flight was dedicated to science and research, with approximately 80 experiments completed.

Chawla, who devoted her entire life to understanding flight dynamics, lost her life during the STS-107 mission when the Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated upon reentering the Earth's atmosphere. While Chawla made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the space program, her legacy lives on through her fellow astronauts and those she has inspired to follow in her footsteps. Her final research conducted onboard Columbia helped us understand astronaut health and safety during spaceflight. Northrop Grumman is proud to celebrate the life of Kalpana Chawla and her dream of flying through the air and in space.