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## Event Honoring Sally Ride's Historic Journey to Space University of Colorado at Colorado Springs



The year 2023 commemorates the milestone achieved by Sally Ride, who, 40 years ago, made history as the first woman from the United States to journey into outer space. June 18 marks the anniversary of her groundbreaking mission aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1983, where she shattered ceilings and broke barriers during her six-day expedition.

Born in 1951, during a time when space travel seemed like mere science fiction and women's rights were severely limited, Sally Ride defied societal expectations by pursuing her unwavering passion for space exploration. Her journey began after reading a Stanford Daily article that revealed NASA's open recruitment of women. Determined and undeterred, she boldly entered the male-dominated industry and applied to become an astronaut candidate. In 1978, Ride achieved a remarkable milestone when she was selected as one of the first six women to become a NASA astronaut. Among the 652 astronauts who have embarked on space travel, Ride stands out as the first woman to accomplish this feat. Her pioneering spirit extended beyond space exploration, as she also blazed a trail as the first LGBTQ+ astronaut.

To pay tribute to Sally Ride's legacy, Colorado Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera assembled a panel of space experts at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs. The event emphasized the significance of supporting women and historically underrepresented communities in STEM fields. It provided a platform to hear firsthand from a panel of Colorado women who are leading boldly in the aerospace industry today. These accomplished women came together to share their extraordinary journeys and inspire other women and girls to aspire to greatness and envision a future that includes space exploration.



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One of the distinguished panelists was Rita Peterson, the Founder and CEO of Caribou Thunder, LLC. With nearly two decades of experience, Rita has fearlessly broken barriers and made significant strides in the fields of space exploration, deep space, Defense, and Intelligence. As a Woman and Native American, she stands tall as a small business owner amidst the industry's most prominent leaders. Rita has emerged triumphantly in a traditionally male-dominated sector, blazing a trail for Indigenous women and women from all backgrounds. Her remarkable journey empowers others, encouraging them to harness their inner strength and pursue their passions in advancing our nation's security to unprecedented heights. "As an esteemed member of the Indigenous Community, I carry a profound connection to my ancestral heritage, fueling my unwavering commitment to empower and uplift Indigenous People. It is my fervent mission to pave the way for inclusivity by creating unprecedented opportunities for Indigenous talent within the National Security Industry, ultimately dismantling barriers and collectively building a future that shines brightly for all."

Building upon her dedication to underrepresented and underprivileged communities, Rita has elevated her commitment by establishing Indigenous Minds, a philanthropic non-profit organization. Indigenous Minds is rooted in the belief that STEAMS (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math, and Spirituality) education is of utmost importance for the development of young Indigenous girls and women. Through this organization, Rita aims to provide access to quality education and empower Indigenous girls and women in their pursuit of knowledge and success. "Due to my personal background and observations over many years, I recognize the need to support our underserved communities. I want us to address social and community needs and raise awareness. I am passionate and committed to being part of the change that is so desperately needed in the Indigenous communities across the Nation."

Driven by an unwavering entrepreneurial spirit, Rita enthusiastically embraces challenges as catalysts for personal and professional growth. She flourishes amidst adversity, adopting a proactive mindset that transforms obstacles into valuable steppingstones on the path to achievement. Collaborating with our exceptional team, we embark on intricate projects, skillfully maneuvering through the complexities intrinsic to our field. With unwavering agility and adaptability, we embrace emerging technologies to forge ahead in the constantly evolving landscape of national security.



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Women in Aerospace empowering  
the younger generations to rise.

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