



DOROTHY VAUGHAN

1910-2008

- She graduated in 1929 from the Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio with a BA in Mathematics. She worked as a teacher to help her family during the Depression.
- In 1935, NASA (then NACA) had established a section of women mathematicians who performed complex calculations. In 1943, Vaughn began working for the West Area Computing, a segregated unit of only African-Americans. She specialized in calculations for flight paths, and the Scout Project.
- Vaughan was assigned as acting head of the West Computers in 1949. She was the first black supervisor at NASA and one of few women supervisors.
- She worked for opportunities for the women in the West Group in other departments in NASA.
- Vaughan saw that machine computers were going to be the future and taught herself FORTRAN and computer programming.
- She then began teaching the women in the West Group, programming languages and concepts to prepare them for transition.
- She moved to electronic computing in 1961, after NASA introduced the first digital computers to the center at Langley.
- Vaughan worked in the Numerical Techniques Division through the 1960's and joined the new Analysis and Computation Division (ACD), a racially and gender-integrated group.
- She retired from NASA in 1971.
- In 2019, the Vaughan crater on the far side of the moon was named in her honor, and in 2019 she was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal
- On November 6, 2020, a satellite named after her was launched into space

The film “HIDDEN FIGURES” (2017), based on a book by Margot Lee Shetterly—[*Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race*](#)—drew attention to the contributions of Vaughan and the other “West Computers”, including Katherine Johnson and Mary Jackson, who provide NASA with important mathematical data needed to launch the program's first successful space missions.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothy_Vaughan

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