

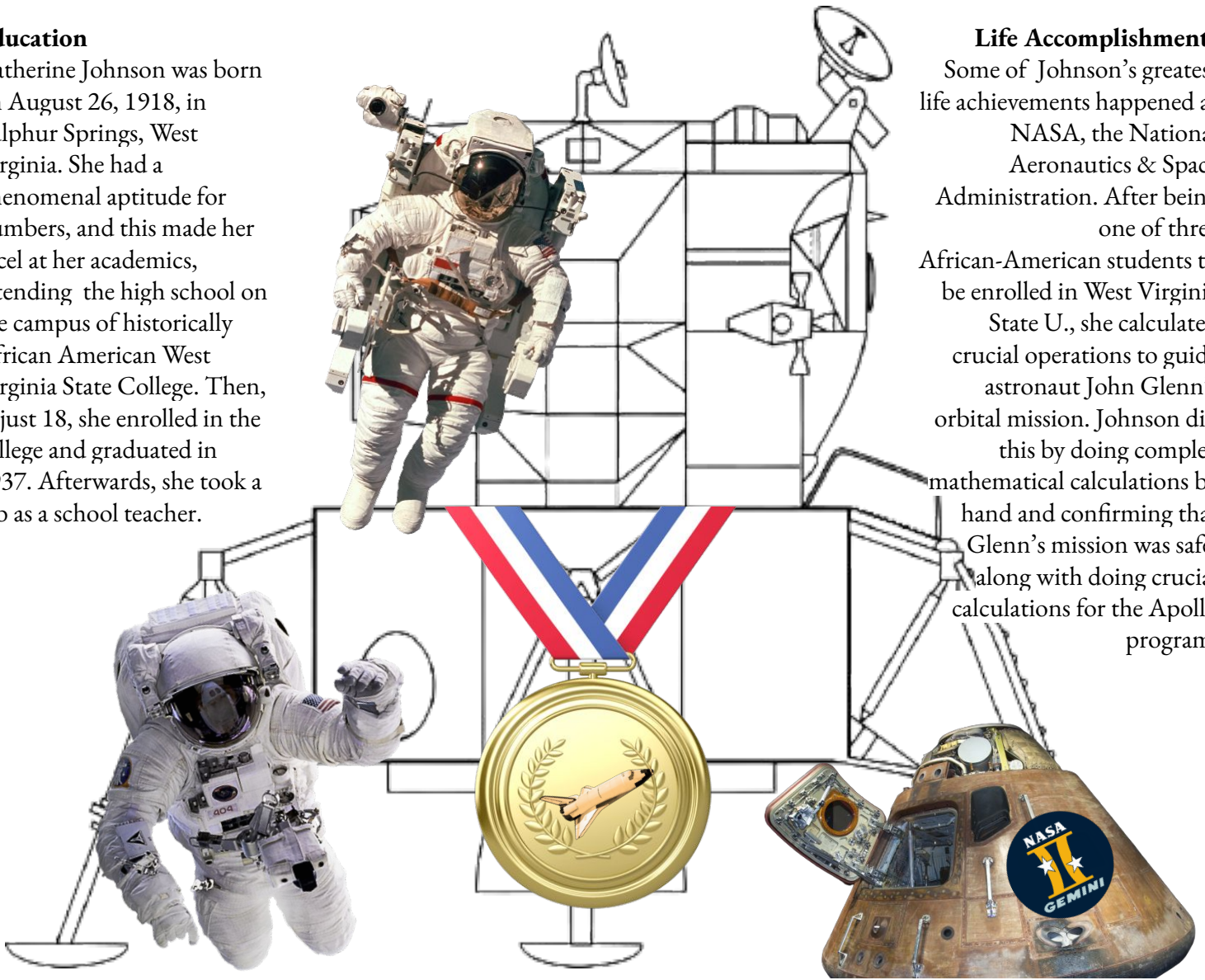
Katherine Johnson

Education

Katherine Johnson was born on August 26, 1918, in Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. She had a phenomenal aptitude for numbers, and this made her excel at her academics, attending the high school on the campus of historically African American West Virginia State College. Then, at just 18, she enrolled in the college and graduated in 1937. Afterwards, she took a job as a school teacher.

Life Accomplishments

Some of Johnson's greatest life achievements happened at NASA, the National Aeronautics & Space Administration. After being one of three African-American students to be enrolled in West Virginia State U., she calculated crucial operations to guide astronaut John Glenn's orbital mission. Johnson did this by doing complex mathematical calculations by hand and confirming that Glenn's mission was safe, along with doing crucial calculations for the Apollo program.



Life Accomplishments (Continued)

Johnson went on to calculate the trajectory for Alan Shepard (Another Astronaut)'s mission, and analyzing it, making sure that Shepard's trajectory was correct. When asked when her greatest accomplishment was, Johnson replied it was when she did the calculations to sync the Apollo Service Module and the Lunar Lander. In 2015, she was also awarded the highest civilian honor possible - The Presidential Medal of Freedom by Barack Obama, who was president at the time.

Impact

Johnson's impact not only was a lasting one on the space exploration scene, bringing a new age of many technologies such as the Apollo Lunar Lander and the Space Shuttle. However, her impact was more than just math and science. Johnson inspired many african-american citizens, especially for women, showing them they could do great things, regardless of their place of origin. This drove the civil rights movement, lobbying for equality between ethnicities. While Johnson died on Feb. 24, 2020, her legacy will live on, ensuring that generations to come will learn her life in detail, and her impact will continue to inspire.