

**Paul and Dellene “Dee” Carlson leave behind legacy that will
inspire and support new generation of Astronaut Scholars**

Trust of Paul and Dellene “Dee” Carlson provides the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation a generous gift of over \$400,000.



Paul and Dellene “Dee” Carlson saw the space industry grow in front of their eyes. Dee was one of only a few women who worked on NASA’s space program in the 1960s and 70s. Sometimes the only woman in a room with hundreds of men, there were times when she was denied promotions or annual salary increases due to her gender. But, much like the accomplished female ASF Scholars making critical contributions to today’s space industry, Dee was fueled by a desire to prove herself as a vital asset no matter the team or space company she joined.

Dee’s story begins in 1964, when she was drawn to Florida by its beaches and warm weather. Upon arriving in Cocoa Beach, she quickly found herself immersed in and inspired by the growing space program following the ground-breaking Mercury missions.

After being hired by McDonnell Aircraft, Dee had a front-row seat for Project Gemini, NASA’s second human spaceflight program. She supported the software engineers who worked on the Gemini Astronaut training program by managing administrative tasks, which included ensuring all classified files were properly documented and stored. At one point, an engineer with the company provided Dee the opportunity to step into the one of the Gemini training elements to test the equipment in advance of the astronauts. She jumped at the chance, later noting, “It was the first time that I had ever really been involved in something so close to what the astronauts actually do.”

After leaving McDonnell Aircraft, Dee joined Bendix Corporation, where she assisted the associate general manager. There, she witnessed one of the Saturn V launches, noting how astounded she was that the crew was able to pull it off.

Over the coming years, Dee’s thirst for new discoveries continued. She observed many flights to space, including those of the historic Apollo missions. Following her time at Bendix, Dee moved to EG&G, where she ultimately worked on the Space Shuttle program.

“When I first came down here, I just couldn’t believe that I was a part of history,” Dee once said. “It was unbelievable that girl from a small town in New Hampshire should wind up working in the space program.”

Today, thanks to people like Dee, many more girls are paving new roads in the world of space.

Paul's career in the industry spanned from the beginning of the space program, working on the Mercury program with McDonnell Aircraft, later called McDonnell Douglas, and continued as the space program grew, working on the Gemini and Apollo programs with McDonnell Douglas. Paul work in the space industry did not stop there, he worked on the Space Shuttle program with Lockheed.

Paul and Dee embodied the character traits we hope to inspire in our Astronaut Scholars – ambition, self-motivation, adaptability, high ethical standards, persistence and tenacity. Having watched the space program grow first-hand, they uniquely understood the importance of cultivating a new generation of explorers committed to technological breakthroughs.

We are deeply honored to have been remembered in their trust with this significant gift, and look forward to ensuring her story, passion and thirst for discovery live on in the young, exceptional minds we support – our Astronaut Scholars.