



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dr. Kathy Sullivan, NASA Astronaut, bestows \$20,000 financial award from the Amelia Earhart Festival to the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation

ORLANDO – The first American woman to walk in space, Dr. Kathy Sullivan, has selected the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation (ASF) to receive a \$20,000 financial award that will be used to support future Astronaut Scholars. The donation comes as part of a financial gift from the Amelia Earhart Festival, which named Sullivan as the 2023 recipient of its Pioneering Achievement Award for a career that best exemplifies the trailblazing spirit of the famed female aviator.

“Amelia Earhart and Dr. Sullivan are the perfect examples of visionary women who took their dreams and harnessed them into powerful contributions to aviation and space,” said ASF President and CEO Caroline Schumacher. “Our Astronaut Scholars follow this same inspirational path. They are the best and brightest minds in science, technology, engineering and math who show initiative, creativity and excellence in their chosen field. When you have a world filled with this sort of innovative, pioneering spirit, that’s when humankind can make lasting change and positively influence society for generations to come. With Dr. Sullivan’s generous donation, the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation will be able to do its part to help advance this world.”

This generous gift will allow two of the selected female Astronaut Scholars to be sponsored by the Amelia Earhart Festival, in honor of Astronaut Kathy Sullivan. It is the sincere hope and desire of the Amelia Earhart Festival and Kathy Sullivan that other donors join their effort in supporting and inspiring future generations to pursue STEM disciplines.

“For years, women have helped map the future of exploration – in the air, in space, on land and under the sea. But we need more of them in the field,” Sullivan said. “For nearly 40 years, the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation has found bright young minds who are ready to blaze a new trail and make their mark on our world. I am honored to bestow this generous financial award from the Amelia Earhart Festival to the ASF to help future female Scholars dream even bigger.”

Sullivan’s expertise spans the frontiers of space and sea. In January 1978, she was one of the six women (in a class of 35) selected by NASA to become Space Shuttle astronauts. She later served as a Mission Specialist aboard STS-41G (1984) and STS-31 (1990), then later became Payload Commander for STS-45 (1992). In total, Sullivan spent 532 hours in space, and most notably, was part of the team that launched, rescued, repaired and maintained the Hubble Space Telescope. She retired from NASA in 1993.

In 2020, Sullivan made history again when she became the first woman (and eighth person overall) to visit the deepest spot in the ocean — the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, seven miles below the surface of the Pacific Ocean. From inside her submersible, the DSSV Pressure Drop, she marked the historic moment by phoning the International Space Station and speaking with fellow NASA astronauts.

Throughout her career, Sullivan assumed a series of distinguished positions, including chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and later as its administrator. Among her accolades, she belongs to the National Aviation Hall of Fame, the Woman Aviators Hall of Fame, the Astronaut Hall of Fame, and in 2014 was named one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People. [Click here](#) to learn more about Sullivan.

About Astronaut Scholarship Foundation

The [Astronaut Scholarship Foundation](#) (ASF) is an Orlando-based, 501(c)3 nonprofit commemorating the legacy of America's pioneering astronauts. Founded in 1984 by the six surviving Mercury 7 Astronauts, ASF partners with industry leaders, universities and individual donors to support and reward exceptional college students pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Over the past 39 years, more than \$8.3 million has been awarded to nearly 800 college students. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of the Treasury policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

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