

## Christa C. McAuliffe

Sharon Christa McAuliffe was born on September 2, 1948. She moved to Framingham on Joseph Road where she lived with her younger brothers and sisters Lisa, Betsy, Steven and Christopher. She graduated from Marian High School in 1966 and was a member of the National Honor Society. She attended Framingham State College. She married Steve McAuliffe in 1970. They had two children, Scott born in 1976 and Caroline born in 1979. Christa applied and was accepted for the space program in the summer of 1985. She was one of 11,000 applicants. In her application she was asked: "Why do you want to be the first U.S. private citizen in space?" She answered:

I remember the excitement in my home when the first satellites were launched. My parents were amazed and I was caught up with their wonder. In school, my classes would gather around the TV and try to follow the rocket as it seemed to jump all over the screen. I remember when Alan Shepard made his historic flight - not even an orbit - and I was thrilled. John F. Kennedy inspired me with his words about placing a man on the moon and I still remember a cloudy, rainy night driving through Pennsylvania and hearing the news that the astronauts had landed safely.

As a woman, I have been envious of those men who could participate in the space program and who were encouraged to excel in the areas of math and science. I felt that women had indeed been left outside of one of the most exciting careers available. When Sally Ride and other women began to train as astronauts, I could look among my students and see ahead of me an ever-increasing list of opportunities.

I cannot join the space program and restart my life as an astronaut, but this opportunity to connect my abilities as an educator with my interest in history and space is a unique opportunity to fulfill my early fantasies. I watched the Space Age being born and I would like to participate.

Taken from : *Christa McAuliffe Pioneer Space Teacher*, Charlene W. Billings

Christa was allowed to take twenty-four ounces of mementos into space. Christa packed her husband's class ring from the Virginia Military Institute, her daughter's cross and chain, her son's stuffed frog "Fleegle," a T-shirt with the New Hampshire state seal on it, a photograph of the student body at Marian High School, a pennant from Concord High School, and a T-shirt with one of her favorite mottoes on it: "I touch the future. I teach."

"NASA had limited Christa's time with the media to two hours a week during her training. Nevertheless she managed to give interviews to every major U.S. news magazine, newspaper, and broadcast news network.

*Life in the 1900's*

## Christa C. McAuliffe cont.

She appeared on many popular television shows to answer questions about herself and the Teacher in Space Project. Her warmth, sincerity, and enthusiasm endeared her to the nation. She was the most celebrated astronaut since Sally Ride became the first American woman in space in June 1983.

Taken from : *Christa McAuliffe Pioneer Space Teacher*, Charlene W. Billings

Christa planned to teach two classes from space. She would tell how it felt to be in space and also how space looked. Christa said that she felt like one of the pioneer women who went west in a covered wagon because like them she was going to a new place.

Christa McAuliffe trained in Houston up until she died in the shuttle accident in January 1986.

Christa told her students, "Whatever it is, try it." She was not afraid. She said, "You can do more than you think you can."

Taken from: *Christa McAuliffe Reaching for the Stars* by Patricia Stone Martin



## An excerpt from Christa Corrigan McAuliffe's application for the Challenger Program:

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In developing my course, The American Woman, I have discovered that much information about the social history of the United States has been found in diaries, travel accounts and personal letters. This social history of the common people, joined with our military, political and economic history, gives my students an awareness of what the whole society was doing at a particular time in history. They get the complete story. Just as the pioneer travellers of the Conestoga waggon days kept personal diaries, I, as a pioneer space traveller, would do the same.

My journal would be a trilogy. I would like to begin it at the point of selection through the training for the programme. The second part would cover the actual flight. Part three would cover my thoughts and reaction after my return.

My perceptions as a non-astronaut would help complete and humanise the technology of the Space Age. Future historians would use my eyewitness accounts to help in their studies of the impact of the Space Age on the general population.