



Sally Ride: America's First Woman in Space

By Lynn Sherr

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The definitive biography of Sally Ride, America's first woman in space, with exclusive insights from Ride's family and partner, by the ABC reporter who covered NASA during its transformation from a test-pilot boys' club to a more inclusive elite.

Sally Ride made history as the first American woman in space. A member of the first astronaut class to include women, she broke through a quarter-century of white male fighter jocks when NASA chose her for the seventh shuttle mission, cracking the celestial ceiling and inspiring several generations of women.

After a second flight, Ride served on the panels investigating the *Challenger* explosion and the *Columbia* disintegration that killed all aboard. In both instances she faulted NASA's rush to meet mission deadlines and its organizational failures. She cofounded a company promoting science and education for children, especially girls.

Sherr also writes about Ride's scrupulously guarded personal life—she kept her sexual orientation private—with exclusive access to Ride's partner, her former husband, her family, and countless friends and colleagues. Sherr draws from Ride's diaries, files, and letters. This is a rich biography of a fascinating woman whose life intersected with revolutionary social and scientific changes in America. Sherr's revealing portrait is warm and admiring but unsparing. It makes this extraordinarily talented and bold woman, an inspiration to millions, come alive.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Sally Ride, the first American woman to go into space, impressive had earned a newly minted doctorate in physics from Stanford when she applied for the space program, beating out a thousand applicants for the job. Her focus was on her work and that dedication led to all of her successes. Published originally for the adult market, this audiobook will light a spark in girls who do not yet know that the sky is literally their limit. Ride spent much of her post-NASA years encouraging young women to study math and science. Written by Ride's close friend, news commentator Lynn Sherr, this is an objective look at the astronaut's complex life with all of her strengths and her shortcomings. Ride kept her lesbian relationship with partner Tam O'Shaughnessy hidden from the public. Even close friends, including Sherr, were surprised by its revelation in her obituary. While listeners will never know Ride's reasons for keeping her sexual orientation private, this biography will inspire young women who have grand ideas by knowing that this woman let nothing stand in her way. Pam Ward's narration is straightforward, objective, and suits the book beautifully.—Joan Kindig, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review When her unexpected death from cancer was announced in 2012, the national outpouring of grief over the loss of Sally Ride was swift and genuine. The subsequent obituary revelation that Ride was a lesbian in a committed relationship for more than a quarter-century was proof of how successfully the icon had guarded her personal life. With the full cooperation of Ride's family and friends, both inside and outside of NASA (including ex-husband and fellow astronaut Steve Hawley), author Sherr pores over Ride's life, from her tennis-star childhood to her college years in the male-dominated field of physics and meteoric rise as America's first woman in space. As familiar as readers believe themselves to be with Ride's story, Sherr has done an impressive job of uncovering the pressures (and sometimes comical missteps) of NASA's macho culture and its approach to the first class of women astronauts, the unparalleled commitment Ride brought to her job, and the zeal with which she embraced her later challenge to broaden science opportunities for girls. This is an intimate and enormously appealing biography of a fascinating woman, a triumph of research and sensitivity that lives up to its subject and will likely move readers to tears in its final, poignant pages. -- Colleen Mondor

Review

"This is an intimate and enormously appealing biography of a fascinating woman, a triumph of research and sensitivity that lives up to its subject and will likely move readers to tears." (*Booklist, Starred Review*)

"Beautifully done . . . impossible to put down. Sherr draws us into a will and a passion more vast than outer space." (Patricia Cornwell, international bestselling crime writer)

"Engrossing...Sherr provides a window into one of the most fascinating figures of the 20th century." (*Publishers Weekly*)

"As an astronaut who became an icon, Sally Ride was an inspiration to millions. But as Lynn Sherr documents in this candid, thorough, and touching portrait, she was also an explorer of life. I'm grateful to Lynn for revealing the Sally I never knew, and for filling an important gap in the literature of the U.S. space program." (Andrew Chaikin, space journalist and author of *A Man on the Moon*)

"In this engaging and entertaining book, Lynn Sherr tells the story of America's exploration in the outer

reaches of space and in the innermost attitudes toward human sexuality. We learn not only about Sally Ride's extraordinary life as the first American woman in space, but also for the first time of her intense and equally fascinating private life.” (Cokie Roberts, author and commentator, NPR and ABC News)

“A great American biography . . . Lynn Sherr’s Sally Ride is a vibrant, honest, and at long last, complete portrait of the woman who bucked history, changed the space agency, and helped alter her country.” (Sally Jenkins, bestselling author and journalist)

“Wow. What a read. I was enthralled and enchanted. Sally Ride is a national treasure, free-thinker, and adventurer extraordinaire. Lynn Sherr's years as a NASA correspondent bleed through with the pulsing drama of our early space discoveries. And her close friendship with Sally renders the inside story replete with delightful and eccentric detail.” (Diana Nyad, champion ocean swimmer)

“An exquisite and careful biography . . . one of the most inspiring stories I've ever read about a woman at the top of her profession who never stopped pushing herself; who never stopped serving the causes she loved and who never lived a public life as the woman she really was. . . . I was moved, inspired and grateful for this detailed and compelling account of the life of such an extraordinary woman.” (Nicolle Wallace, political commentator and author of *Eighteen Acres*)

“The book includes rich details about the personal life of a very private woman....Fast paced and an engaging read.” (*Library Journal*)

“Revealing...An intimately celebratory biography.” (*Kirkus Reviews*)

“Engaging” (*Ms. Magazine*)

“Compelling” (*O, The Oprah Magazine*)

“Complex and nuanced.” (*Wellesley Magazine*)

“Unsparing” (*Sacramento Bee*)

“A biography of America’s first woman in space that is riveting, beautifully written and rich in detail... Sherr effectively goes beyond Ride’s familiar public facade — the bright smile and twinkling blue eyes — and reveals a complex woman...[a] captivating biography.” (*The Washington Post*)

“Sherr, a longtime ABC News correspondent who covered Ride’s flight and knew her well, brings a confident, breezy tone to Ride’s life story. It’s a full and happy life that makes for a fast, fun read.” (*USA TODAY*)

“Revealing...The Sally Ride that emerges here — courageous, gifted, determined, complicated, conflicted — is both heroic and human. Sherr captures her as someone who didn’t just want to make a name for herself. She wanted to make a difference.” (*San Diego Union-Tribune*)

“A must-read.” (*Washington Blade*)

“Thanks to this moving, inspirational account of [Sally Ride’s] life, we can more fully honor this hero as a human being.” (*San Francisco Chronicle*)

“What’s refreshing about Sally Ride: America’s First Woman in Space is that Lynn Sherr paints an evenhanded portrait of Ride as an iconic American whose accomplishments are inseparable from the second-wave feminist moment in which she reached them.” (*American Prospect*)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ana Lopez:

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Robert Irizarry:

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Frank Foushee:

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