

Unsung Heroes: The African American Mathematicians Who Helped America Win the Space Race

The history of the United States space program is filled with remarkable achievements and iconic figures. However, there is a less-known but equally important story of a group of unsung heroes who played a crucial role in America's success in the space race: African American mathematicians.



Hidden Women: The African-American Mathematicians of NASA Who Helped America Win the Space Race (Encounter: Narrative Nonfiction Stories) by Rebecca Rissman

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 17258 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 112 pages



Katherine Johnson: The "Human Computer"

Katherine Johnson, a brilliant mathematician, worked as a "computer" at NASA's Langley Research Center. In an era before electronic computers, human computers performed complex mathematical calculations by hand.

Johnson's expertise in orbital mechanics was instrumental in the success of numerous space missions, including the Apollo 11 moon landing.



Mary Jackson: The "Engineer in Skirts"

Mary Jackson was an engineer who played a significant role in wind tunnel research at NASA. She became the first African American woman to graduate from NASA's engineer training program and one of the few

female engineers in the field. Jackson's contributions to aeronautics helped improve the design of aircraft and spacecraft.



Mary Jackson, an African American engineer who worked at NASA

Dorothy Vaughan: The "Hidden Figure Supervisor"

Dorothy Vaughan rose through the ranks at NASA to become the first African American supervisor in the agency's history. As head of the West Area Computers section, she mentored and supervised a team of mathematicians and programmers. Vaughan's leadership and expertise played a vital role in the development of IBM mainframe computers.



Impact on the Space Race

The contributions of these African American mathematicians were critical to America's victory in the space race. Their expertise helped the United States put satellites into orbit, send astronauts to the moon, and establish its dominance in space exploration. Despite facing discrimination and barriers, these women persevered and made invaluable contributions to NASA and the nation.

Legacy and Recognition

The legacy of these African American mathematicians extends far beyond their time at NASA. Their stories have inspired generations of students and scientists and have helped to change perceptions of what is possible for women and minorities in STEM fields. In recent years, there has been a

growing recognition of their contributions, with films, books, and documentaries dedicated to their work.

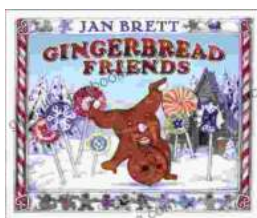
The African American mathematicians who worked at NASA during the space race were extraordinary individuals who fought against prejudice and discrimination to achieve their dreams. Their brilliance, perseverance, and dedication helped America win the space race and paved the way for future generations of scientists and engineers. Their stories are a testament to the power of human ingenuity and the importance of diversity and inclusion inSTEM.



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