

**JANUARY 28, 1986**

# CHALLENGER DISASTER



**This iconic image from the Challenger disaster shows the fireball created when Challenger's fuel cell failed and the booster rockets separated from the spacecraft.**

# ACCIDENT TURNED CELEBRATION INTO SORROW

U.S. shuttle program was grounded for nearly 3 years

- Francis R. (Dick) Scobee
- Mission role: Commander
- Born: May 19, 1939, in Cle Elum, Washington.
- Fast fact: Air Force test pilot flew 45-plus types of aircraft, logging 6,500-plus hours.

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**M**ission STS 51-L 40 years ago on Jan. 28, 1986, was the 25th carried out by the U.S. Space Shuttle Program and the 10th Challenger flight. of 11,000 applicants from the field of education to be the first teacher to fly in space.

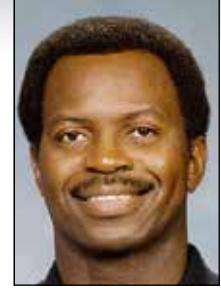
Another civilian, Gregory B. Jarvis, was aboard the shuttle. He competed against 600 other employees at Hughes Aircraft Corp.'s Space and

- Michael J. Smith
- Mission role: Pilot
- Born April 30, 1945 in Beaufort, North Carolina.
- Fast Fact: Was a commander in the U.S. Navy at the time of the Challenger accident.

- Judith A. Resnik
- Mission role:  
Mission specialist
- Born April 5,  
1949 in Akron,  
Ohio.
- Fast Fact:  
PhD in electrical  
engineering, staff  
fellow in the Lab-  
oratory of Neuro-  
physiology at NIH.



The space shuttle Challenger lifts off from Pad 39B on Jan. 28, 1986, at 11:38 a.m. with a crew of seven astronauts and the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite on board.



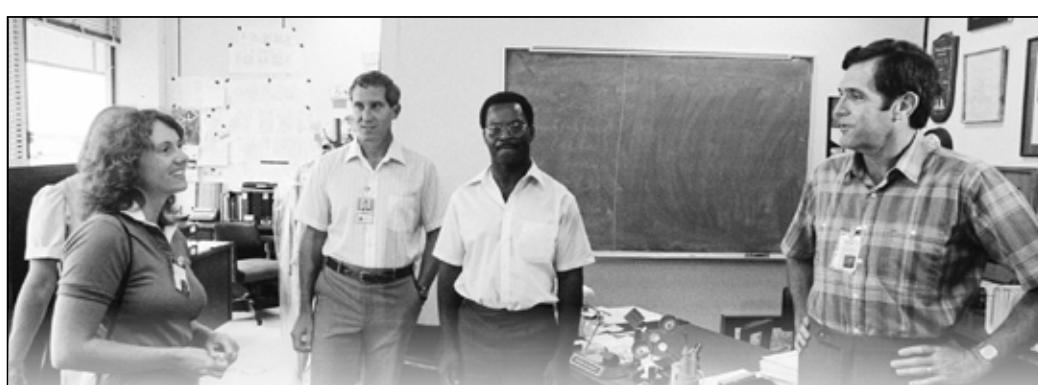
- Ronald E. McNair
- Mission role: Mission specialist
- Born: October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina.
- Fast Fact: Specialized in quantum electronics and laser technology at MIT.



- Ellison S. Onizuka
- Mission role:  
Mission specialist
- Born June 24, 1946, in Kealakekua, Kona, Hawaii.
- Fast Fact:  
Worked on orbiter test, checkout teams and launch support crews for the first two Shuttle missions.



- Gregory B. Jarvis
- Mission role:  
Payload specialist
- Born Aug. 24,  
1944, in Detroit,  
Michigan
- Fast Fact: Like  
McAuliffe, was not  
a federal govern-  
ment employee.  
Competed with 600  
other employees  
for spot.



- S. Christa McAuliffe
- Mission role: Payload specialist
- Born: Sept. 2, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts
- Fast Fact: Selected from among more than 11,000 applicants in the education profession to become the first teacher to fly in space.
- Fast Fact, II: Was excited as a youth by the Apollo moon landing program and on her application wrote: "I watched the Space Age being born and I would like to participate."
- Selected by NASA in 1984.

# BY THE NUMBERS

**2:45 and 200** Challenger broke up at 65,000 feet before plummeting back to earth. When the cabin hit the ocean's surface 2 minutes and 45 seconds later it was traveling at more than 200 mph.

Top speed shuttles  
can reach **17,500 mph**

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Challenger first launched April 4

**10  
of  
19** 1983, and two months later, on June 18, 1983 it took its second flight, this time with Sally K. Ride as the pilot. Challenger became the four-shuttle fleet's workhorse until the 1986 tragedy, launching for 10 of the program's 19 flights over that span.

Cost over the life of the shuttle program. As of 2010, it cost approximately \$775 million to prepare and launch a shuttle. Endeavour, the orbiter built to replace Challenger, cost approximately \$1.7 billion.

Due to the tragedy, Challenger was the least used shuttle in the program. Discovery was the most used. How the shuttles stacked up against each other:

SOURCE: NASA.GOV