

# Dr. Mae Jemison

## **First African American Woman in Space, Medical Doctor, Astronaut**

Mae C. Jemison blasted into orbit aboard the space shuttle Endeavour, September 12, 1992, the first woman of color to go into space. Now, founder and president of two technology companies, the space flight was just one of a series of accomplishments for this dynamic woman.

Born in Decatur, Alabama and raised in Chicago, she entered Stanford University at the age of sixteen on a scholarship. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering and fulfilled the requirements for an A.B. in African and Afro-American studies. She earned her doctorate in medicine at Cornell University Medical College.

Prior to joining NASA in 1987, Dr. Jemison worked in both engineering and medicine. She was a General Practitioner in Los Angeles with the INA/Ross Loos Medical Group. She then spent two and a half years (1983-1985) as Area Peace Corps medical officer for Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa. On her return to Los Angeles, she worked as a General Practitioner with CIGNA Health Plans of California, while updating her engineering skills.

Dr. Jemison served as a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut for six years. As the science mission specialist on the STS-47 Spacelab J flight, a US/Japan joint mission, she conducted experiments in life sciences, material sciences, and was a co-investigator of the Bone Cell Research experiment.

Dr. Jemison resigned from NASA in March 1993 and founded The Jemison Group, Inc. The Jemison Group, Inc. was established to focus on the beneficial integration of science and technology into our everyday lives. Company projects have included consulting on the design and implementation of solar thermal electricity generation systems for developing countries and remote areas and the use of satellite-based telecommunications to facilitate health care delivery in West Africa.

Currently, Dr. Jemison is building a new business, BioSentient Corporation, a medical technology company that develops and markets mobile equipment worn to monitor the body's vital signs and train people to respond favorably in stressful situations. BioSentient was created in July 1999 by The Jemison Group, Inc., which holds the exclusive license from NASA to commercialize this exciting new technology. Originally designed to control motion sickness, BioSentient's technology presents significant opportunities across a wide spectrum of health and human performance areas.

In 1994, Dr. Jemison founded and currently chairs The Dorothy Jemison Foundation for Excellence, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Earth We Share™ (TEWS), a program of the foundation is an annual international science camp. Students from around the world, ages 12 to 16, work together to solve current global dilemmas, like How Many People Can the Earth Hold? and Predict the Hot Public Stocks of The Year 2030? The four-week residential program builds critical thinking and problem solving skills through an experiential curriculum developed by Dr. Jemison.

Dr. Jemison also serves as Bayer Corporation's national science literacy advocate.

As an A.D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University, Dr. Jemison manages to stay connected to her Alma Mater through this program which brings select individuals to the campus to supplement the activities of permanent faculty. Dr. Jemison is a former professor of Environmental Studies at Dartmouth College. Between 1995 – 2002, she directed the Jemison Institute for Advancing Technology in Developing Countries. S.E.E.ing the Future: Science, Engineering and Education, an institute project and workshop, is a White Paper compiled and edited by Dr. Jemison that discusses a framework for prioritizing governmental funding of science and engineering research that was released in Spring 2002. She was the moderator for an IEEE-USA Technical Symposia Space Technologies for Disaster Mitigation and Global Health.

Dr. Jemison was elected into the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine in 2001. She serves on the Board of Directors for Scholastic, Inc. and Valspar Corporation, and the Texas Governor's State Council for Science and BioTechnology Development. Dr. Jemison has received numerous awards and honors, including induction into the National Women's Hall of Fame; selection as one of the *People* magazines' 1993 "World's 50 Most Beautiful People"; Johnson Publications Black Achievement Trailblazers Award; the Kilby Science Award; National Medical Association Hall of Fame; selection as a Montgomery Fellow, Dartmouth College; Texas Science Hall of Fame; Rotary Club Chicago's ROTARY/One Award; and a number of honorary doctorates including Doctor of Humanities from Princeton University.

Dr. Jemison has presented to the UN on the uses of space technology, appeared weekly as the host and technical consultant of the "World of Wonder" series on the Discovery channel in 1994-1995, appeared in an episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and was the subject of the PBS documentary *The New Explorers*. She is an honorary member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and is the namesake of an alternative public school in Detroit. In January 1999, she was selected as one of the top seven women leaders in a Presidential Ballot national straw poll conducted by The White House Project.

Dr. Jemison's first book, *Find Where the Wind Goes: Moments From My Life*, autobiographical anecdotes about growing up, was written for teenagers and was published in Spring 2001.

***In her speeches***, Dr. Jemison inspires and encourages audiences. A fierce advocate of a liberal arts education, with a natural aptitude toward the sciences, Dr. Jemison addresses a myriad of topics, from general motivation, to science literacy, to technological and medical innovations, always bringing her sense of humor to each story she tells. The product of a middle American upbringing, Dr. Jemison, a precocious student who found her role models in teachers, parents and mentors who guided her along life's path, traces her education from her mother's school teacher encouragement, through her undergraduate years as a science major at Stanford, into Cornell and her "humbling" as a medical student. She takes the audience on an exciting and diverse voyage which mirrors her life, encompassing a journey from Africa to Outer Space – focusing on exploration of the frontiers of science and human potential.

Dr. Jemison resides in Houston.