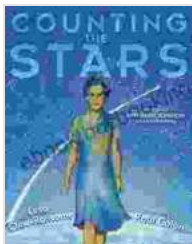


# The Story Of Katherine Johnson: The Trailblazing NASA Mathematician Who Changed Space Exploration Forever



**Counting the Stars: The Story of Katherine Johnson, NASA Mathematician** by Lesa Cline-Ransome

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 11098 KB

Screen Reader: Supported

Print length : 32 pages



In the annals of science and technology, the name Katherine Johnson stands tall as a beacon of brilliance and determination. As a mathematician at NASA during the mid-20th century, she defied societal barriers and pushed the boundaries of space exploration. Her story, immortalized in the acclaimed film "Hidden Figures," continues to inspire aspiring scientists, engineers, and all who seek to overcome adversity.

## Early Life and Education

Katherine Coleman Goble was born on August 26, 1918, in White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. From a young age, she exhibited an exceptional talent for mathematics. Despite the limited resources and societal challenges facing African Americans in the segregated South, Katherine's passion for numbers never waned.

In 1939, she became one of the first African American students to attend West Virginia State College. There, she excelled academically, majoring in mathematics and French. Her brilliance caught the attention of professors, who encouraged her to pursue graduate studies.

### **Joining the Langley Research Center**

In 1953, Katherine joined the Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, as a "computer," a term used to describe human calculators at the time. Her exceptional abilities quickly became evident as she worked on various projects related to aircraft design and analysis.

As the Space Race gained momentum, Katherine's expertise in celestial mechanics and trajectory calculations proved invaluable. She played a pivotal role in the development of the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions.

### **Hidden Figures and the Apollo 11 Mission**

Katherine's contributions to NASA's historic achievements were initially overshadowed by her gender and race. However, in recent years, her story has gained recognition through the book and film "Hidden Figures." This has shed light on the pivotal role she and other African American women mathematicians played in the success of the space program.

In 1969, Katherine's calculations played a crucial role in guiding the Apollo 11 astronauts to a successful moon landing. Her unwavering accuracy and meticulous attention to detail ensured the safe return of Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins.

### **Awards and Legacy**

Throughout her career, Katherine received numerous accolades for her groundbreaking work. In 1967, she was awarded the NASA Lunar Orbiter Spacecraft and Operations Team Award. In 2015, President Barack Obama bestowed upon her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States.

Katherine's legacy extends far beyond her achievements in space exploration. She became a role model and inspiration for generations of scientists, engineers, and students from all backgrounds. Her story teaches us that with determination and a belief in oneself, anything is possible.

### **Continuing Inspiration**

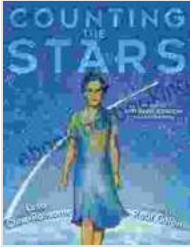
The story of Katherine Johnson is a timeless testament to the power of perseverance, innovation, and the indomitable spirit. Her life and work continue to inspire countless individuals to pursue their dreams, break barriers, and reach for the stars.

As we explore the vastness of space and venture into uncharted territories, the legacy of Katherine Johnson serves as a constant reminder that anyone, regardless of their background or circumstances, can make a profound impact on the world.

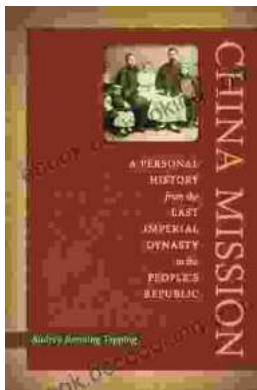
In her own words, "I don't have a feeling of inferiority. Never had. I'm as good as anybody, but no better." These words embody the essence of Katherine's unwavering belief in herself and her abilities. May her story continue to ignite the spark of inspiration in us all.

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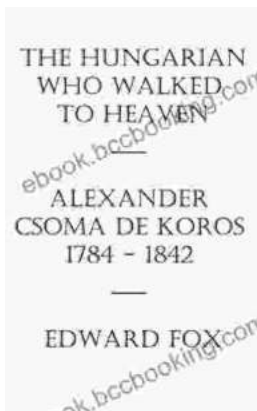


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