

Timeline of Women's Achievements in Physics, Astronomy and Related Disciplines since the 18th Century

- 1732** Laura Bassi becomes first ever official female physics professor
- 1835** Mary Somerville & Caroline Herschel are the first female inductees into the Royal Astronomical Society
- 1848** Maria Mitchell is the first female member of American Association for the Advancement of Science
- 1865** Maria Mitchell is appointed professor of astronomy at Vassar, the newly founded women's college
- 1898** Marie Curie discovers the radioactive element polonium, naming it after her home country of Poland
- 1901** Harriet Brooks publishes her findings on radioactivity, including the discovery that one element can change in to another
- 1903** Marie Curie wins the Nobel prize in Physics for her work on radioactivity
- 1905** Lise Meitner becomes the first woman to earn a PhD in physics from the University of Vienna
- 1906** Hertha Ayrton is the first woman to receive the Royal Society's Hughes Medal
- Marie Curie becomes the first woman to teach at the Sorbonne, taking over her late husband Pierre's role as head of the physics department
- 1911** Marie Curie receives her second Nobel Prize, this time in Chemistry
- 1912** Henrietta Swan Leavitt, computer at Harvard College Observatory, develops a method for measuring the brightness of stars
- 1917** Lise Meitner discovers the radioactive element protactinium
- 1918** Lise Meitner is the first woman to be named a full professor of physics in Germany
- Emmy Noether discovers the mathematical nature of the conservation laws of physics
- 1921** Emmy Noether publishes her famous work on abstract rings and ideal theory
- 1925** Annie Jump Cannon is the first woman to receive an honorary degree from Oxford University
- 1926** Katherine Burr Blodgett is the first woman to graduate with a PhD from the University of Cambridge
- 1931** Annie Jump Cannon receives the Henry Draper Medal from the National Academy of Sciences
- 1933** Irene Joliot-Curie, working with Frederic Joliot-Curie, discovers the first radioisotope
- 1935** Irene and Frederic Joliot-Curie share the Nobel Prize in Chemistry
- 1938** Lise Meitner, working in Sweden, provides the insight which explains nuclear fission

- 1945** Kathleen Lonsdale becomes one of the two first female fellows of the Royal Society
- 1948** Maria Goeppert Mayer develops a theory explaining the arrangement of atoms within a nucleus
- 1956** Maria Goeppert Mayer is the first female member elected to the National Academy of Sciences for work in physics
- 1958** NASA is founded after Eilene Galloway helps to write the National Aeronautics and Space Act
- 1962** Maguerite Perey, discoverer of francium, becomes the first female member of the French Academy of Sciences
- 1963** Maria Goeppert Mayer shares the Nobel Prize in Physics with Hans D. Jensen and Eugene Wigner for “their discoveries concerning nuclear shell structure”
Valentina Tereshkova – who had an engineering degree - becomes the first woman in space
- 1964** Lise Meitner is the first female recipient of the Enrico Fermi Award
Alinoush Tarian becomes the first female physics professor in Iran
- 1967** Jocelyn Bell Burnell discovers pulsars as part of her PhD thesis project but is overlooked by the Nobel committee and the 1974 Prize in Physics is awarded to her advisor Antony Hewish
- 1969** Mina Rees becomes the first female president of American Association for the Advancement of Science
- 1973** Shirley Ann Jackson is the first African American woman to gain a PhD from MIT
- 1975** Chien-Shiung Wu becomes the first female president of the American Physical Society
- 1976** Eleanor Burbidge is the first female president of the American Astronomical Society
- 1977** Rosalyn Sussman Yalow shares in the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Roger Guillemin and Andrew Victor Schally
- 1990** Mildred Dresselhaus receives the U.S. National Medal of Science
- 1995** Eileen Collins is the first female space shuttle commander
Melissa Eve Bronwen Franklin and her research team discover the top quark, the last quark to be found experimentally.
- 1999** Jill Tarter becomes director of the Center for SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence) Research
- 2008** Jocelyn Bell Burnell becomes the first female president of the Institute of Physics
Peggy Whitson becomes the first female commander of the International Space Station