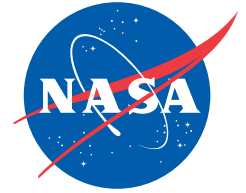


NASA Biography



Ellen Ochoa, a veteran astronaut, is the 11th director of the Johnson Space Center. She succeeded Michael L. Coats, who retired at the end of 2012. Prior to being named director, she served the center as deputy director for five years, beginning in 2007.

Ochoa is JSC's first Hispanic director, and its second female director. Dr. Carolyn L. Huntoon served as JSC director from 1994-95.

Ochoa, who considers La Mesa, Calif., to be her hometown, became the first Hispanic woman to go to space when she served on a nine-day mission aboard the space shuttle Discovery in 1993. She has flown in space four times, logging nearly 1,000 hours in orbit. Prior to her astronaut career, she was a research engineer and inventor, with three patents for optical systems. She is honored to have two schools named for her, the Ellen Ochoa Middle School in Pasco, Wash., and the Ellen Ochoa Learning Center in Cudahy, Calif.

Ochoa earned a bachelor's degree in physics from San Diego State University and a master's degree and doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif.

As a doctoral student at Stanford, and later as a researcher at Sandia National Laboratories and NASA Ames Research Center in California, Ochoa investigated optical systems for performing information processing. She is a co-inventor on three patents for an optical inspection system, an optical object recognition method, and a method for noise removal in images.

At Ames, she managed the Intelligent Systems Technology Branch before being selected as an astronaut in 1990. She flew on shuttle missions STS-56 in 1993, STS-66 in 1994, STS-96 in 1999, and STS-110 in 2002, logging a total of 978 hours in space.

She became deputy director of flight crew operations at Johnson in December 2002 and director of flight crew operations in September 2006.

Ochoa has been recognized with NASA's Distinguished Service Medal, Exceptional Service Medal, Outstanding Leadership Medal, and four Space Flight Medals. She also is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Harvard Foundation Science Award, Women in Aerospace Outstanding Achievement Award, The Hispanic Engineer Albert Baez Award for Outstanding Technical Contribution to Humanity, the Hispanic Heritage Leadership Award, and San Diego State University Alumna of the Year.

She is married to Coe Fulmar Miles of Molalla, Ore. They have two children.