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# COURAGEOUS

## AFRICAN AMERICANS



Mae Jemison



Ron Weber  
Portland Observer

### Mission in Space and Earth

#### NASA's first African- America astronaut mentors kids

Mae Jemison did not have a mentor, and yet she became one. Even as a college student at Stanford University, Jemison found herself drawn to nurturing young children's interest in space and science. After earning two bachelor degrees in only four years in chemical engineering and African-American studies, she moved on to Cornell University's medical school in the fall of 1977. During this time she became a volunteer in a Tai refugee

camp during a summer program. Shortly after completion of her studies and starting her internship at the Los Angeles University of Southern California Medical Center, Jemison became the area Peace Corps medical officer for Sierra Leone and Liberia in West Africa.

With a multitude of educational accomplishments and skills Mae Jemison decided to follow up on a dream she had for many years; that of joining the NASA space program. When Japan and the United States joined together to conduct experiments in life sciences and materials processing on the space shuttle Endeavor, she got her chance to go into outer space on Sept. 12, 1992.

Jemison was the only black woman and one of only five African-American astronauts in the

space agency. After returning from her historic mission, she continued to encourage children to stay in school and follow their dreams.

In 1994, Jemison founded and directed the Jemison Institute for Advancing Technologies in Developing countries. Although her schedule was hectic, she also found time to run the Jemison Group, which continues today to improve health care in West Africa.

Born in 1958 in Decatur, Ala., Jemison would be raised in Chicago. As the youngest of three children, her early dreams of science and space were fully supported by her loving parents, a maintenance supervisor and a school teacher.

After over six years with the NASA, Jemison founded The Earth

We Share, an annual international science camp. Here, students, ages 12 to 16 come together from around the world to take part in problem solving regarding current global dilemmas. Less than one year after she left NASA, Jemison became a professor of Environmental Studies at Dartmouth College.

Jemison's countless awards in medicine, science, technology, space exploration, and education show her constant drive to grow intellectually and share that knowledge with people of all ages. Her contribution to our nation's minority children, as well as thousands of children across the globe will not be forgotten. Children throughout the world today aspire to walk in her giant footsteps.

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### Rights Advocate Awarded



Women's rights champion and civil rights leader Dorothy Height is presented with the Congressional Gold Medal during a ceremony on Capitol Hill with President Bush, left, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., second from right, and Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska.

#### Dorothy Height cited for enormous accomplishment

(AP)—Hailing Dorothy Height as "the giant of the civil rights movement," President Bush presented her with the Congressional Gold Medal.

Height accepted Congress' highest honor last week under the vaulted dome of the Capitol Rotunda to warm applause from lawmakers.

Height served more than 30 years as the president of the National Council of Negro Women, an organization dedicating to uplifting black women and their communities. She also held several leadership positions in the YWCA, where she advocated progressive policies embracing minorities.

In 1964, she organized a series of informal dialogues between white and black women from the North and South called "Wednesdays in Mississippi."

Citing those and other Height contributions, Bush called her a hero who has "helped to extend the promise of our founding to millions."

"She's a woman of enormous accomplishment," the president said. "She's a friend of first ladies like Eleanor Roosevelt and Hillary Rodham Clinton. She's known every president since Dwight David Eisenhower. She's told every president what she thinks since Dwight David Eisenhower."

Bush recalled that Height was the only woman in the "Big 6," a group of black activists that included Martin Luther King Jr.

"Truth of the matter is, she was the giant of the civil rights movement," he said.

More recently, she has won international recognition for her work promoting AIDS education.

Height said she accepted the medal "on behalf of the millions of people, particularly women, whose work goes unnoticed."

Rep. Diane Watson, D-Calif., said Height "has left a lasting legacy not only for African-American families but the country as a whole."

Since George Washington received the first Congressional Gold Medal in 1776, Congress has bestowed the honor on some 300 people, including Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II, Rosa Parks and President and Nancy Reagan.