

III. In Memoriam

IN MEMORIAM

Marsha Gail Freeman

Our colleague and dear friend Marsha Freeman, 76, passed away on September 20, 2023 while in the ICU unit of the hospital as a result of an infected bed sore. She had also tested positive for Covid. Her long-term fight with her Parkinson's was also having a deleterious effect on her eating and speaking, which was a cause of great frustration during her last few months.

Marsha had a Master's Degree in Education, but her interests took her into the area of aerospace. One of the earliest members of the LaRouche movement in the early 1970s, she wrote thousands of articles for the LaRouche-associated science magazine *Fusion* and its successor *21st Century Science & Technology*, as well as for the weekly *Executive Intelligence Review* for which she was Technology Editor. Marsha also wrote three books, *How We Got to the Moon: The Story of the German Space Pioneers*; *Challenges of Human Space Exploration*, about the scientific work by Russians and Americans on the Russian *Mir* space station; and *Kraft Ehricke's Extraterrestrial Imperative*. She was also instrumental in preserving the legacy and works of space engineer Kraft Ehricke, one of the most creative and imaginative figures from the Peenemünde group of German space pioneers who had come to the United States after World War II and played a critical role in the development of the U.S. space program.

Marsha was a genuine and tough intellectual, but was at the same time a very "gentle soul." Even people who knew her only briefly were impressed with her knowledge and acumen. And several who commented on her passing noted her wonderful smile and sense of humor.

On one occasion at an International Space Congress, which Marsha had participated in annually since 1992, a noted MIT professor who knew her, came up excitedly, hugged her, and wanted to know if he could possibly introduce his postdoctoral candidates, who were accompanying him at the Congress, to her. She, of course, was more than happy to meet them.

Brian Harvey, a noted space historian, dubbed Marsha "the queen of space history." When she started writing about space, there were but few women working in the field. Marsha was at the first Shuttle launch in 1981 from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, and interviewed the pilot, Robert Crippen.

When giving tours to school children at the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., seeing the boys respond with a good deal of eagerness, the girls not so much, Marsha always told them that space was "gender-neutral," and not just something for the boys. She was very happy to attend the event in the White House, where President Bill Clinton, on March 5, 1998, announced the appointment of Col. Eileen Collins as the first woman Space Shuttle Commander.

She was an active member of the International Astronautical Federation's History Committee for over 20 years, editing some of their annual journals. She also presented papers at several of their congresses.

She inherited a deep love of science and a keen sense of criticism from her father, Joseph Osofsky, a World War II veteran. He only had a high school education, but took night courses at the RCA Institute, and worked on the DEW line (Distant Early Warning system). He also designed the packaging for the optical instruments that



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Marsha Gail Freeman, 1947-2023

were placed in unmanned science satellites. Her father became the veritable Mr. Wizard of their neighborhood in Queens, New York, capable of resolving most of his neighbor's technical and electrical problems. Many of the kids in the neighborhood went on to careers as nuclear physicists at MIT and other prestigious schools, asserting that they had their first lessons in science while gathering around Joey Osofsky's workbench. And Marsha was always the apple of his eye.

She made major contributions to Lyndon LaRouche's 1988 Presidential campaign video program on space, *The Woman on Mars*.

Her knowledge, her insights and her humor will be sorely missed by all, but she will remain in our memory forever. Not just one, but two stars in the heavens have been named in her honor, one named "Marsha Freeman" and the other, "Marsha Gail Freeman."

Remembrances Received

A sampling of condolences received by Marsha's husband, William Jones:

"Also, with a heavy heart I finished reading your note about Marsha's passing. What a commitment to life! And to the future! All we can do is carry on, and I'm sure you will."—Harrison Schmitt, Apollo 17 astronaut and former U.S. Senator from New Mexico.

"So sorry to hear; that's so sad. I know she had not been well for some time and our communications had become less frequent as a result. She was a pleasure to meet, and I so much valued her knowledge, views, and political framework. She was fearless in her views. She was most supportive to me and what I was doing especially on Chinese and Russian space history.... She did indeed have a sharp wit and a great way with words and language. She will be forever remembered in the space history community."—Brian Harvey, author and space historian.

"I was lucky enough to meet Marsha during her participation in the 'NASA and the Long Civil Rights Movement' symposium back in March 2017. I really enjoyed her talk on TVA and civil rights."—Brian C. Odom, NASA Chief Historian.

"My thoughts are with you during this stressful period in your life, but I take joy in remembering Marsha as a dedicated, productive space historian."—Rick Sturdevant, Deputy Command Historian, United States Air Force.

"So sorry to hear about the passing away of Marsha. She was an outstanding contributor to space exploration and advanced the field of Astronautics. She leaves a great legacy and will be always remembered by all of

us."—Dr. Arnauld Nicogossian, former NASA Associate Administrator for Life and Microgravity Sciences.

"I am sorry for your loss. I do recall providing several interviews for her, and always respected her knowledge of the space business and her sharp line of questioning."—Michael Griffin, former NASA Administrator.

"She was a wonderful person, a talented, dedicated journalist who published so many accurate, well written articles on fusion, space and other important scientific and technical programs. I have known her since the 1970s. She attended many Fusion Power Associates annual conferences over the years since then and we have missed her presence there in recent years due to her declining health. The world has lost a star."—Steve Dean, President, Fusion Power Associates.

"Marsha was a wonderful friend and colleague. We exchanged calls and e-mails for many years. She had a genuine interest in Latin American space development and authored an outstanding article on the various space programs in the region. Her book on Krafft Ehrlicke represents a unique and valuable contribution to his work, and her unwavering courage on various subjects was truly commendable. She will be greatly missed."—Dr. Pablo de Leon, Director, University of North Dakota Human Spaceflight Laboratory.

Official letter from NASA Headquarters:

"Dear William,

"It is with a heavy heart that many of us have learned of Marsha's passing. Her contributions to the literature, [and] history of space exploration will forever be known in her writings. My first introduction to Marsha was while she was in the process of writing her book, the *Challenges of Human Space Exploration*. I remember her tremendous smile and the ever-so-slightest hint of a Bronx accent.

"Please know that she will be dearly missed, and that we will forever value her contribution to human spaceflight and the many thousands of articles she has authored, with thousands more citations. As the Artemis program continues to rise to bring us back to the Moon, many people will want to again revisit the origins of the U.S. space program. They will undoubtedly read a large amount of her work.

"Thank you for sharing her with us and please accept our deepest condolences at this time. Please know that our hearts are heavy with you.

"Respectfully,

"J.D. Polk, Chief Health and Medical Officer, NASA HQ."