

# ASTRONAUT BIOGRAPHY



National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center  
Houston, Texas 77058

May 2021



## Shannon Walker

(Ph.D.) NASA Astronaut

### Summary:

Shannon Walker was selected by NASA to be an astronaut in 2004. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physics, a Master of Science and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Space Physics from Rice University. Walker began her professional career at the Johnson Space Center (JSC) in 1987 as a Robotics Flight Controller for the Space Shuttle Program. In 2010, she served as Flight Engineer for Expedition 24/25, a long-duration mission aboard the International Space Station that lasted 163 days. Walker most recently served as mission specialist on the on the Crew-1 SpaceX Crew Dragon, named Resilience, which landed May 2, 2021. She also served as Flight Engineer on the International Space Station for Expedition 64.

### Personal Data:

Born June 4, 1965 in Houston, Texas. Married to astronaut Andy Thomas. Recreational interests include cooking, running, weight training, camping and travel. Her mother, Sherry Walker, resides in Houston, Texas. Her father, Robert Walker, is deceased.

### Education:

Graduated from Westbury Senior High, Houston, Texas, in 1983; received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physics from Rice University in 1987; received a Master of Science and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Space Physics from Rice University in 1992 and 1993, respectively.

### NASA Experience:

Dr. Walker began her professional career with the Rockwell Space Operations Company at the Johnson Space Center in 1987 as a Robotics Flight Controller for the Space Shuttle Program. She worked Space Shuttle missions as a Flight Controller in the Mission Control Center, including STS-27, STS-32, STS-51, STS-56, STS-60, STS-61, and STS-66. From 1990 to 1993, Dr. Walker took a leave of absence from the Johnson Space Center to attend graduate school, where she studied the solar wind interaction with the Venusian atmosphere. In 1995, she joined NASA's civil service and worked in the International Space Station (ISS) Program. Dr. Walker performed robotics integration, working with the International Partners in the design and construction of the robotics hardware for the space station. In 1998, she joined the Mission Evaluation Room (MER) as a manager responsible for coordinating the resolution of orbit technical problems for the ISS. In 1999, Dr. Walker moved to Moscow, Russia to work with the Russian Space Agency and its contractors in the areas of avionics integration for the Station as well as setting up a program of integrated problem solving amongst the International Partners. She returned to Houston in 2000 after a year in Russia and became the technical lead for the station MER as well as the Deputy Manager of the On Orbit Engineering Office. Prior to selection as an astronaut candidate, Dr. Walker was the Acting Manager of the On Orbit Engineering Office.

Selected by NASA as an astronaut in May 2004, Walker completed Astronaut Candidate Training in February 2006. Her training included scientific and technical briefings, intensive instruction in Shuttle and International Space Station

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systems, physiological training, T-38 flight training, and water and wilderness survival training. She has also completed qualification in the spacewalk skills program and the Canadian Space Agency Mobile Servicing System (MSS) Robotics Operator (MRO) course.

Following her Astronaut Candidate Training, Dr. Walker assumed the duties as the crew support astronaut for the Expedition 14 crew, which was on orbit for 215 day from September 2006 to April 2007. As a crew support astronaut she was the primary contact for all crew coordination, planning, and interactions, and was the primary representative for the crew while they were on orbit. In addition, Dr. Walker was assigned as a Spacecraft Communicator (CAPCOM) in the Mission Control Center in Houston. In that role, she was the primary communication link between the crew on the space station and the ground support team. Her work as a CAPCOM culminated in her assignment as the lead Space Station CAPCOM for the STS-118 Shuttle mission which docked with the Station, carried out four spacewalks and added the S5 truss to the station.

In the summer of 2007, Dr. Walker began training for a long-duration flight on the International Space Station. Initially assigned as a backup Expedition 19 crewmember, she also served as a backup crew member for Expedition 21/22. She was a primary crew member for Expedition 24/25.

### **Spaceflight Experience:**

Expedition 24/25 (June 15 through November 25, 2010). Dr. Walker launched and served as Flight Engineer (pilot) of the Russian Soyuz spacecraft, TMA-19, on June 15, 2010. Two days later, the Soyuz docked with the ISS and Dr. Walker served as a Flight Engineer for a long-duration mission aboard the International Space Station. She again served as the Soyuz pilot during her crew's undock and landing, which occurred November 25, 2010. Her entire mission lasted 163 days, with 161 of them aboard the station.

SpaceX Crew-1 and Expedition 64 (November 15, 2020 to May 2, 2021) was the first post-certification mission of SpaceX's Crew Dragon spacecraft – the second crewed flight for that vehicle – and a long duration mission aboard the International Space Station. She was the Crew-1 mission specialist and also served as Flight Engineer on the International Space Station for Expedition 64. Walker contributed to many things while aboard the station including scientific investigations, technology demonstrations, growing crops and taking hundreds of pictures of Earth. She completed 168 days in orbit and participated in 5 spacewalks.

### **Awards/Honors:**

Goethe Institute Scholarship for Study Abroad, Rice Fellowship for Graduate Study, Rockwell Sustained Superior Performance Award; seven Group Achievement Awards for work in the International Space Station Program; three Going the Extra Mile Awards for work in the International Space Station Program; a Space Flight Awareness Award for contributions to the International Space Station Program; and nine Performance Bonus Awards.

### **Organizations:**

The Ninety-Nines International Organization of Women Pilots.

### **Pronunciation:**

SHAN-un WALL-ker