

# KALPANA CHAWLA



Even as a child, Kalpana Chawla knew she wanted to fly. Classmates remember Chawla pointing to the sky and telling them, “I’m going to fly.” After earning a PhD in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado in 1988, she finally got her wish in 1997. As a crew member on the STS-87 *Columbia*, Chawla became the first Indian-born woman and the second person of Indian descent to travel into space. On January 16, 2003, Chawla and six other astronauts entered space aboard the STS-107 *Columbia* for a 16-day science and research mission. On February 1, the spaceship broke apart as it reentered Earth’s atmosphere, killing everyone aboard 16 minutes prior to landing. At the time of her death, Chawla had logged 30 days, 14 hours, and 54 minutes in space.

**GONZAGA**  
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to solidarity*

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