



MATILDA

EFFECT



Pionierinnen der Forschung **Female Pioneers of Research**

Pt. 7

Katherine Johnson



BESSEr@KIT





Katherine Johnson (1918-2020)

Mathematician

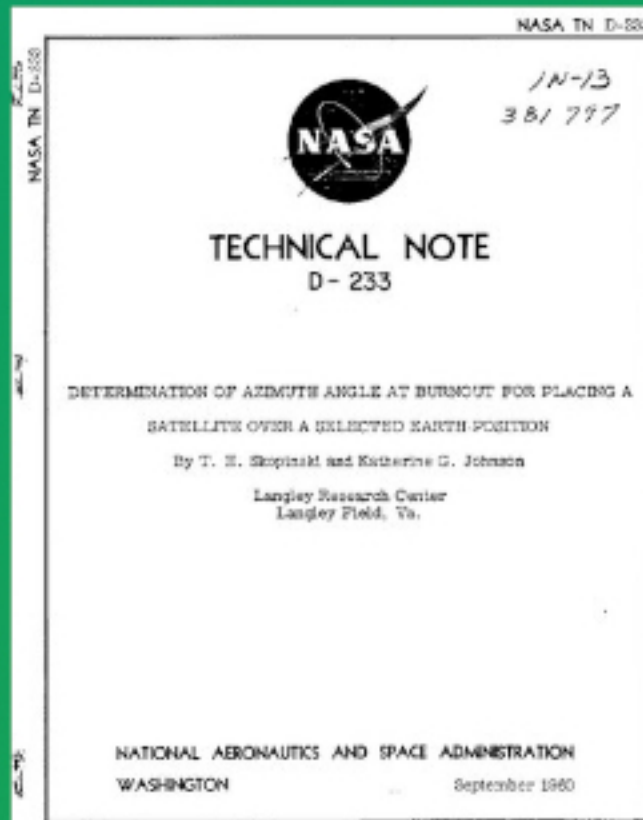
After entering high school at the age of 10 and college at 14, she graduated with honors at 18 with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and French.



After West Virginia State first admitted black students in 1939, she, along with two men, was among the first black students to be admitted.

In 1953, she began her career at the NACA, the predecessor of NASA.





"I was working with Ted Skopinski and he wanted to leave and go to Houston, but Pearson, our supervisor—who was not a fan of women—kept pushing him to finish the report we were working on. Finally, Ted told him, ‘Katherine should finish the report, she's done most of the work, anyway.’"



It was her first scientific publication and also the first time that a woman from this department was officially named as a co-author.

Her calculations served as the basis for the second manned spaceflight, as well as for the first Earth orbit and the Mercury and Apollo mission series. Until her retirement in 1986, she was involved in the first phase of the Space Shuttle program.





Johnson was awarded multiple honors for her achievements, including the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* in 2015 and the *Congressional Gold Medal* in 2019.





“My dad taught us that there’s no difference between a black person and a white person. They’re just people.”

“Girls are capable of doing everything men are capable of doing. Sometimes they have more imagination than men.”

