

Senior Space Science Expert Badge**Space Science Bios**

Share these pictures and bios of female astronomers with your troop.



Credit: Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

Henrietta Swan Leavitt

Henrietta Swan Leavitt was a deaf scientist whose extensive work led her to discover the relationship between a star's brightness cycle and its absolute magnitude—its actual brightness. She discovered that Cepheid variable stars brightened and dimmed in a regular pattern. After recognizing this, she was able to use the “inverse square law” to calculate how far away the Cepheid stars were from Earth. It was this discovery that first allowed astronomers to measure the size of our galaxy, the Milky Way, and the distance between the Earth and faraway galaxies.

Jill Cornell Tarter

Jill Cornell Tarter is an American astronomer, formerly the director of the Center for SETI Research, who has worked on a number of major scientific projects throughout her career. She is credited with coining the term “brown dwarf” for the classification of stars with insufficient mass to sustain hydrogen fusion and was the model for SETI researcher Ellie Arroway in the film “Contact.” In addition, her work has brought her significant recognition in the field. Not only has she received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Women in Aerospace, two Public Service Medals from NASA, and the Tesla Award of Technology, but she was also named one of Time 100's most influential people in the world in 2004.



Credit: AFP

Women in Space Science

For biographies of current female space scientists, visit NASA's Women@NASA website:

<https://women.nasa.gov>