Sharon Christa Mcauliffe Encyclopedia Article

Sharon Christa Mcauliffe

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Contents

Sharon Christa Mcauliffe Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Sharon Christa Mcauliffe.....3

Sharon Christa Mcauliffe

1948-1986

American teacher and astronaut who captured the heart of a nation after her selection by NASA as the first teacher to fly in space. Upon her college graduation, McAuliffe began teaching, specializing in American history and social studies. In 1984, she was selected by NASA to communicate with students from space during a Space Shuttle mission. Tragically, the shuttle *Challenger* exploded shortly after takeoff in January 1986, killing all astronauts aboard. McAuliffe's popularity made the explosion especially horrific to Americans and the world.