



## **Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson (2017)**

The subject of the recent hit movie, *Hidden Figures*, Katherine Coleman Goble Johnson played a crucial role in the development of space travel in the U.S. while blazing trails for African American women. Johnson graduated from West Virginia State *summa cum laud* in 1937 with degrees in Mathematics and French at the age of 18, when her peers were graduating from high school. In 1953, she started her career at the National Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) which later became the National Air and Space Administration (NASA). During her career with NACA/NASA, Johnson was one of a few women, much less African American women, who were active in direct support of the American space program. Using her knowledge of analytic geometry, she calculated the trajectories for the May 5, 1961 space flight of Alan Shepard, the first American in space; John Glenn's orbit around the Earth on February 20, 1962; the 1969 Apollo 11 mission (the first moon landing), and the 1970 Apollo 13 moon mission. Later in her career, Katherine worked on the space shuttle program, the Earth Resources Satellite, and on the plans for a mission to Mars as well as authoring or coauthoring 26 research reports.