



# NASA's Hispanic Astronauts



**Joseph M. Acaba** Born in 1967 in Inglewood, CA, and raised in Anaheim, CA. Acaba, a former science teacher, was selected by NASA in 2004 as part of the Educator Astronaut Program. He has

logged a total of 306 days in space on three missions. In 2009, Acaba flew aboard STS-119 on the Space Shuttle Discovery to the International Space Station. In 2012, Acaba flew aboard a Soyuz spacecraft to the space station where he worked as Flight Engineer for the Expedition 31/32. Finally, he served as Flight Engineer on the International Space Station for Expedition 53/54. Acaba also is a former Peace Corps worker who spent two years in the Dominican Republic. He enjoys outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, mountain biking, kayaking, and scuba diving. He also enjoys reading, especially science fiction. He received a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of California-Santa Barbara in 1990 and a master's degree in geology from the University of Arizona in 1992.



**Fernando "Frank" Caldeiro** Born June 12, 1958, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, but considers New York City and Merritt Island, FL, to be his hometowns. NASA selected Caldeiro as an astronaut

in 1996. In 2006, he joined the Agency's WB-57 High Altitude Research Program at Ellington Field, and he conducted atmospheric research experiments carried aboard the WB-57 aircraft. In 2002, he was appointed to serve in the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. His hobby was building, flying, and racing his own experimental aircraft, in which he has logged more than 500 hours of flight time. Other interests were snorkeling, amateur radio (KE4RFI), and metalworking. He received an associate's degree in applied science in aerospace technology from the State University of New York at Farmingdale in 1978, a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Arizona in 1984, and a master's degree in engineering management from the University of Central Florida in 1995. Caldeiro passed away on Oct. 3, 2009, after a two-year battle with brain cancer.



**Franklin R. Chang Diaz (Ph.D.)** Born in 1950 in San José, Costa Rica. Chang Díaz became the first Hispanic astronaut when NASA selected him in 1980. He is a veteran of seven space flights: STS-61C in 1986, STS-34 in 1989, STS-46 in 1992, STS-60 in 1994, STS-75 in 1996, STS-91 in 1998, and STS-111 in 2002. He logged more than 1,500 hours in space, including 19 hours during spacewalks. He received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Connecticut in 1973 and a doctorate in applied plasma physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1977.



**Sidney M. Gutierrez (Colonel, U.S. Air Force, Ret.)** Born in 1951 in Albuquerque, NM. NASA selected Gutierrez as an astronaut in 1984. He is a veteran of two space flights.

He served as the pilot on STS-40 in 1991 and the commander on STS-59 in 1994. He received a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1973 and a master's degree in management from Webster College in 1977.



**José M. Hernández** Born August 7, 1962, in French Camp, CA, but considers Stockton, CA, to be his hometown. In 2004, NASA selected Hernández as an astronaut. He had joined the

Agency's Johnson Space Center in Houston as a materials research engineer in 2001. He served as a mission specialist on the Space Shuttle's STS-128 mission, 37th mission to space, in 2009. Hernández grew up as one of four children in a migrant farming family from Mexico. He learned to speak English when he was 12 years old. In 1999, the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists honored him for his professional and community contributions. He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of the Pacific in 1984 and a master's degree in electrical and computer engineering from the University of California-Santa Barbara in 1986.



**Serena M. Auñón-Chancellor (M.D.)** Born on April 9, 1976, in Indianapolis, Indiana, but considers Fort Collins, Colorado, to be her hometown. She graduated from Poudre High School, Fort Collins, Colorado, 1993. Her hobbies include basketball, softball, martial arts, cricket, hiking and jet-skiing. Auñón-Chancellor received a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering from The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., in 1997 and a doctorate of medicine degree from The University of Texas – Health Science Center at Houston in 2001. She completed a 3-year residency internal medicine at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston, Texas, 2004 and then completed an additional year as chief resident in the Internal Medicine Department, 2005. She also completed an aerospace medicine residency at UTMB as well as a master of public health degree in 2007. She is board certified in Internal and Aerospace Medicine. NASA selected Dr. Auñón in July 2009. Dr. Auñón-Chancellor flew a mission aboard the International Space Station as part of Expedition 56/57.



**Michael E. Lopez-Alegria (Captain, U.S. Navy, Ret.)** Born May 30, 1958, in Madrid, Spain, and grew up in Mission Viejo, CA. NASA selected Lopez-Alegria as an astronaut in 1992. A veteran of four space flights, he has logged more than 257 days in space and performed 10 spacewalks totaling 67 hours and 40 minutes. He was a mission specialist during Space Shuttle missions STS-73 in 1995, STS-92 in 2000, and STS-113 in 2002. Between September 2006 and April 2007, he served as the commander of Expedition 14 on the International Space Station. During that mission, Lopez-Alegria conducted five spacewalks for station assembly and maintenance and conducted nearly 500 hours of science operations. As a pilot, he has accumulated more than 5,000 hours in 30 different aircraft. He enjoys sports, traveling, and cooking, and he is interested in national and international political, economic, and security affairs. He speaks Spanish, French, and Russian. He received a bachelor's degree in systems engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1980 and a master's degree in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in 1988. He is a graduate of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government Program for Senior Executives in national and international security.



**Christopher J. "Gus" Loria (Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps)** Born July 9, 1960, in Belmont, MA, but considers League City, TX, to be his hometown. NASA selected Loria as an astronaut in 1996. He was assigned as the pilot for Space Shuttle mission STS-113, but he requested a reassignment due to an injury sustained at home and its subsequent impact on his training. Loria received a bachelor's degree in general engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1983 and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University in 2004.



**Carlos I. Noriega (Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps, Ret.)** Born October 8, 1959, in Lima, Peru, but considers Santa Clara, CA, to be his hometown. NASA selected Noriega as an astronaut in 1994. He is a veteran of two Space Shuttle missions: STS-84 in 1997 and STS-97 in 2000. He has logged more than 481 hours in space, including more than 19 hours conducting spacewalks. Noriega retired from the astronaut corps in 2005 and played a part in the Constellation Program at Johnson Space Center. He enjoys skiing, running, and spending time with his five children. Noriega received a bachelor's degree in computer science from the University of Southern California in 1981, followed by a master's degree in computer science and a master's in space systems operations from the Naval Postgraduate School in 1990.



**Ellen Ochoa (Ph.D.)** Born in 1958 in Los Angeles, CA, but considers La Mesa, CA, to be her hometown. She was the first female Hispanic astronaut to fly in space. NASA selected Ochoa as an astronaut in 1990. She spent nearly 1,000 hours in space during four Shuttle missions: STS-56 in 1993, STS-66 in 1994, STS-96 in 1999, and STS-110 in 2002. She then went on to serve as the 11th director of NASA's Johnson Space Center (JSC). She was JSC's first Hispanic director, and its second female director. Ochoa is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Harvard Foundation Science Award, Women in Aerospace's Outstanding Achievement Award, and the Hispanic Heritage Leadership Award. She is a classical flutist and pilot, and she also enjoys volleyball and bicycling. Ochoa received a bachelor's degree in physics from San Diego State University in 1980, followed by a master's degree and doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University in 1981 and 1985, respectively.



**John D. "Danny" Olivas (Ph.D.)** Born in 1966 in North Hollywood, CA, and raised in El Paso, TX. NASA selected Olivas as an astronaut in 1998. In 2007, he flew on the STS-117 Shuttle mission and conducted two spacewalks. Olivas conducted the first-ever on-orbit repair of a Shuttle during a spacewalk. Olivas served as a mission specialist on the STS-128 mission. He enjoys surfing, hunting, fishing, and spending time with his five children. He received a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Texas-El Paso, a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Houston, and a doctorate in mechanical engineering and materials science from Rice University.



**George D. Zamka (Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps)** Born in 1962 in Jersey City, NJ, and raised in New York City; Irvington, NY; Medellín, Colombia; and Rochester Hills, MI. NASA selected Zamka as an astronaut in 1998. In 2007, he served as the pilot on the Shuttle' STS-120 mission to the International Space Station, his first space flight. Zamka served as the commander of the STS-130 crew. As a colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps, Zamka flew 66 combat missions over occupied Kuwait and Iraq during Desert Storm. He enjoys bicycling, scuba diving, and boating. Zamka received a bachelor's degree in mathematics from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1984 and a master's degree in engineering management from the Florida Institute of Technology in 1997.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

**Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center**  
Houston, Texas 77058  
<http://www.nasa.gov/centers/johnson>

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)