

## The Crew



### Shuttle Commander Rick Husband

The commander of the space shuttle *Columbia* wanted to be an astronaut since he was in fourth grade.

Rick Husband, 45, served as a colonel in the U.S. Air Force, and had traveled to space once already on *Discovery* in 1999. He was an experienced pilot, having spent more than 3,800 hours flying more than 40 kinds of aircraft. NASA chose him for the space program in 1994.

“It’s been pretty much a lifelong dream and just a thrill to be able to get to actually live it,” Husband said on January 16, before *Columbia* launched. He was married and the father two sons, ages 3 and 8.



### Dr. Laurel Salton Clark

Laurel Clark, 41, was a medical doctor and a commander in the U.S. Navy. Her trip aboard the *Columbia* was her first flight to space.

She performed many science experiments in space—including several on herself, to study how being in space affected the human body. But she was able to take some time to write her husband and son about the wonder of being in space.

“Hello from above our magnificent planet

Earth,” she wrote. “The perspective is truly awe-inspiring. Even the stars have a special brightness. I have seen my ‘friend’ Orion several times.”



### Dr. Kalpana Chawla

Kalpana Chawla, 41, grew up in a little town near New Delhi, India, dreaming of traveling to space. She studied engineering, and then moved to the U.S. to earn a degree in aerospace engineering.

On November 19, 1997, she became the first Indian-born woman in space. The news of the *Columbia* disaster plunged her homeland into mourning. Many Indians watched the tragedy unfold on television.

“After her first flight, she became a national hero,” said R.S. Bhatia of the Indian Space Research Organization. “She is an American citizen, but she is ours, too.”



### Col. Ilan Ramon

Ilan Ramon, 48, was a lifelong Israeli military man, serving as a fighter pilot in two Israeli wars. He was Israel’s first astronaut.

“Every time you are the first, it is meaningful,” he said. “Being the first Israeli astronaut, I feel I am representing all Jews and all Israelis.”

Because of the tragedy, the “hearts of the American people and people of Israel are bonded together,” said Israeli Prime Minister

Ariel Sharon. “We are all holding hands and we all pray together.”

Ramon was married and had four children, ages 6 to 14.



### **Captain David M. Brown**

David Brown became an astronaut in 1996, after a career that included working as a trapeze artist, a unicyclist, and a stilt walker in a circus.

The 46 year old was a

Navy captain, pilot, and doctor with a background in biology—an unusual combination that eventually led him into astronaut training. The *Columbia* flight was his first mission in space.

His friends said Captain Brown was hooked on space. He had a telescope in his living room and attended astronomy club meetings. He also owned his own single-engine plane.

He grew up in Arlington, Virginia, and lived in Houston, Texas. His parents still live in a rural area of Virginia. “I always let him dream,” his mother told reporters.



### **Lt. Col. Michael P. Anderson**

Michael P. Anderson, 43, was given a toy airplane when he was 3 years old. He watched the moon landing when he was 9, which confirmed his youthful dreams of

flying in space. As a small boy growing up in Spokane, Washington, he memorized the names of all the American astronauts. He said he always knew he would be an astronaut.

“I can’t remember ever thinking that I couldn’t do it,” he said in an interview with the

University of Washington alumni newsletter in 1998. “I never had any serious doubts about it. It was just a matter of when.”

His flight on *Columbia* was his second space mission. He traveled on *Endeavour* to the space station *Mir* in 1998. He was married.

The son of an Air Force serviceman, Anderson was flying for the Air Force when he was chosen to train as an astronaut in 1994. He worked on *Columbia* as a payload specialist, the person in charge of the experiments.



### **Commander William C. McCool**

Football fan William McCool took a spirit towel from his hometown high school football team with him to space. The 41-year-old from Lubbock, Texas, was on his first

mission. Navy officer McCool was the pilot for the space shuttle *Columbia*. His father was a chief petty officer in the Navy.

McCool was known for his athletic skills and his sense of humor.

“Willie had one of the best senses of humor of any kid you’d ever seen,” Ed Jarman told reporters. Jarman taught McCool’s high school chemistry class. “He could rig up the most comical ways of explaining scientific principles.”

He was chosen for the astronaut program in 1996. He was married and the father of three sons, ages 14, 19, and 22.