

**SHANNON  
MATILDA  
WELLS LUCID**  
**1943-**



**NASA  
AND  
MIR  
ASTRONAUT**

Ever since children have dared to dream, they have always dreamt of going to the moon or to the stars. For the millions of children who dream this, only a small portion actually achieve this goal. In 1943 in war-torn China, a girl was born who had this same dream Her name was Shannon Wells.

From the moment Shannon was born in January 1943 in Shanghai, she never had it easy. When she was six weeks old, her family was interned in a Japanese prison camp. A year later they were exchanged for Japanese POWs and returned to America. After the war, they returned to China but left when the communists took over in 1949.

They settled in Bethany. Shannon always had the dream that someday she would be a space explorer after reading a book on Robert Goddard. People thought her crazy because the United States didn't even have a space program. After graduating from Bethany High School in 1960, she earned her pilot's license and occasionally flew her father to revival meetings in her old Piper Clipper.

When the first seven Mercury astronauts were introduced, she couldn't believe there were no females. She experienced the same discrimination when she tried unsuccessfully to become a commercial pilot. After earning her bachelor's degree in chemistry in 1963 from the University of Oklahoma, she worked at Kerr-McGee as a chemist. Her boss was her future husband Michael Lucid. After they married, she earned her master's in 1970 and doctorate in 1973 in biochemistry at the University of Oklahoma.

In 1978, Lucid finally had a chance to fulfill her dream by getting into the space program. She was accepted as one of the first six female astronauts, along with Sally Ride and Challenger's Judy Resnik. Lucid's first space flight was in June 1985. She also flew on shuttle missions in 1989, 1991, and 1993.

She is best known for her fifth spaceflight in 1996, when she spent 188 days traveling 75.2 miles in space, including 179 days aboard the Russian Space Station Mir. She was the first American woman to serve aboard Mir. She held the record until 2007 for the most hours in orbit by a non-Russian – and a woman.

In 1996 Lucid was awarded the Russian Order of Friendship Medal by President Boris Yeltsin, the highest award that can be presented to a noncitizen. She also received the Congressional Space Medal of Honor for her mission to Mir, the first woman to receive this honor.

She was inducted into the International Space Hall of Fame in 1990, Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 1993, National Women's Hall of Fame in 1998, and U. S. Astronaut Hall of Fame in 2014. Lucid retired from NASA on January 31, 2012.

"Shannon is an extraordinary woman and scientist. She paved the way for so many of us," said Peggy Whitson, former chief of NASA's Astronaut Office at the Johnson Space Center in Houston. "She was a model astronaut for long-duration missions. Like so many others, I always will look up to her."