

## BOOK REVIEW

### WOMEN SPACEFARERS: SIXTY DIFFERENT PATHS TO SPACE



By Umberto Cavallaro  
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Umberto Cavallaro's *Women Spacefarers*, a compilation of biographies of the first 60 women to fly in space, should be on any interested person's reference shelf.

Cavallaro, who is the founder and current president of AS.IT.AF (Italian Astrophilately Society), first compiled his overviews of women in space as a couple of scholarly articles and then expanded that material into a book originally published in Italian.

Cavallaro opens the volume with an overview essay that nicely digests the history of how women have participated in spaceflight. In a tight 17 pages, he glosses the stories of the first women in the Soviet/Russian space program, American Dr. Randy Lovelace's privately funded and short-lived investigations into women's physical capabilities at the beginning of the space age, and how NASA ultimately recruited and integrated women into the astronaut corps.

He relies on web-based materials more than most academics would, but the general history is well-told, if not thoroughly referenced.

Quite helpfully, Cavallaro makes some of the documentary research that he conducted visually evident through the illustrations included in each entry. As one might expect from an expert in philately, images of postage stamps and first day or commemorative covers from around the world dot the pages. But he also reproduces letters and patches, printed in full color throughout the book, to accompany the photographic portraits of each of his subjects. Despite the inherent unevenness of materials available for each of the women, Cavallaro gives almost equal space to each of the 60 women profiled.

Having all of this information in one place makes *Women Spacefarers* a reference book that will be useful to those in the space field for years to come.

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