

EDITOR'S PICK FEATURED

One Step Closer: Lynch lands job with NASA

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May 27, 2020



Glasgow native Kelly Lynch has landed a full-time job at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. Her dream is to become an astronaut.

Photo Courtesy of University of Kentucky



GLASGOW – Kelly Lynch is one step closer to landing her dream job of becoming an astronaut.

She recently landed a full-time position as a solid propellant engineer at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama and will start work there soon.

"It's just amazing to be in this environment and to be able to share knowledge with all of the people at NASA because they are all incredibly intelligent," she said. "It's just very exciting."

Lynch added that she feels like all of the hard work she put in through the years to get good grades during her schooling and the work she has done during the summers at her various internships has finally paid off.

"I feel like all of that was finally worth it and was culminating to my dream career," she said.

Becoming an astronaut is something she has aspired to do since she was a small child.

"I've just always had an interest of going into space and helping with space flight exploration," she said.

Lynch attended Space Camp in Huntsville when she was younger.

"That really prompted me to want to work at NASA after graduating college," she said.

Lynch is a former Glasgow Independent School District student; however, she did not attend public school until she was in the fourth grade. Prior to then, she was homeschooled by her mother, Michelle, gifted and talented coordinator for the school district.

“At the beginning of Kelly’s fourth-grade year, Michelle came to enroll her and we administered a basic skills test and a writing assessment just to make sure Kelly was ready for the fourth grade. You can imagine our delight when we found that Kelly was leaps and bounds above grade level in all areas. Her writing at that time was on par with most high school students. Her communication skills set her apart from any child I had ever worked with at the elementary level,” said Kelly Oliver, who is now the district’s gifted and talented coordinator.

She continued that Lynch was an award-winning composition competitor throughout middle and high school.

“I am so proud of her. I have watched her grow into this incredible woman who wants to contribute to our world in real and positive ways,” Oliver said. “And while NASA is all about space exploration and pushing boundaries, we have to remember that this is Kelly’s first job. To aspire and attain a dream like this right out of school is remarkable.”

The path Lynch took to get to where she is now has been a long one.

While still a Glasgow High School student, Lynch went on to study at the Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science at Western Kentucky University. By the time she graduated from the Gatton Academy, she had more than 70 college credit hours.

She studied chemical engineering at the University of Kentucky and completed her undergraduate degree there earlier this month.

Dr. Sarah Wilson had Lynch as a student in four courses while at UK from the time Lynch was a sophomore until her senior year.

“Knowing Kelly, this has been her dream kind of since I knew her as a sophomore student. She has always wanted to work for NASA and she really wants to be an astronaut,” Wilson said. “I’m really excited for her and excited that she gets the opportunity to go and get her career started there.”

She described Lynch as being a hard worker and a good team leader. Wilson also said Lynch is the type of person who thinks deeply about the theory and the experiments she is doing, which really makes her effective as a chemical engineer.

Lynch has done six internships with NASA. Five of them have been at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, but one was at Johnson Space Center in Houston.

During one of her internships at the Marshall Space Flight Center, Lynch worked in a solid propellant mix lab where she made an inert version of solid propellant.

She has also worked on life-support systems for the Orion capsule that will take astronauts to the moon and handled International Space Station hardware, said a UK press release.

But it was at the Johnson Space Center where she got to actually walk through mission control.

Lynch had seen mission control in movies and read news articles about it, and said the experience lived up to her expectations.

“When you finally walk in there, it looks just like you would expect it to. It’s just an incredible experience to see it firsthand,” she said. “It was very cool.”

Lynch still has quite a ways to go before becoming an astronaut.

“Right now, NASA is requiring applicants to have a master’s degree in a STEM discipline,” she said.

Lynch has yet to start on her master’s degree and is unsure what she wants to study.

NASA issues a call for astronauts once every four years, she said.

“There’s thousands and thousands of applicants and only a few get selected each year,” she said.

Lynch probably won’t be the first woman to go to Mars as an astronaut.

“NASA has goals to go to Mars sooner than when I would probably be eligible to be an astronaut, so if I am the third or fourth woman to go to Mars, I’m not complaining,” she said.

Gina Kinslow



