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### **Former Astronaut Sally Ride To Address**

#### **Society of Women Engineers 2002 National Conference: "The Art of Engineering"**

##### **Largest Group of Women Engineers to Convene October 9-12 in Detroit to Discuss Successes and Skill, Objectives and Obstacles for Women In/Entering the Profession**

Detroit, Michigan—Sally K. Ride, who made history in 1983 as the first American woman to ride in space—and whose post-NASA career has continued to influence new generations of young women to enter the fields of science, math, engineering, and technology—will be the featured speaker at “The Art of Engineering,” the 2002 National Conference of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE). The Conference will take place Wednesday, October 9, through Saturday, October 12, at the Cobo Conference/Exhibition Center in Detroit, Michigan. Ride will give her address, “Reach for the Stars,” at the official opening event on Thursday evening.

More than 3,000 professional women engineers and students, as well as educators and employers, are expected to attend the Conference this year. Some 150 events will include a career enhancement series, seminars, panels, technical and non-technical tours, a Career Fair, exhibits, and special member events, including awards presentation ceremonies.

The Conference marks the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of SWE's Detroit Section.

#### **Conference a Spotlight on Engineering's Art**

Conference co-chair Laurie Ramsay, vehicle integration supervisor, Vehicle Personalization, Ford Motor Company, Detroit, said, “The 2002 Conference provides an occasion for the association to reflect on the engineering education and employment picture for women. In the United States, only 9 percent of professional engineers are women, and only 18 percent of students graduating from engineering programs are women.”

Above all, however, the Conference strikes an optimistic note, Ramsay noted. “The theme, ‘The Art of Engineering,’ reflects a vital side of engineering that is contrary to the stereotypical image of engineers as solitary professionals dealing only with equipment, mathematical equations, quantitative measurement—and pocket protectors!” she said.

“While we use those tools, engineering primarily is an exciting endeavor—creative, intuitive, spirited, and very much a team effort. This is the message that we believe resonates especially well with women, and it’s the message we’re conveying throughout the Conference.”

Recent findings by the Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology (CAWMSET), also known as the Morella Commission, reported that, in 2001, more than 600,000 technology jobs went unfilled because of the lack of U.S.-trained professionals with the skills to fill them. “And these shortages are expected to increase once the technology-driven economy has recovered,” said Ramsay, “with newly created jobs projected to a total of 5.3 million by 2008.

“These statistics are a call to action for SWE Conference attendees and exhibitors alike. In addition, we believe they should serve as a wake-up call for citizens of all countries. Women engineers can help ensure global progress,” Ramsay concluded.

### **Professional Sessions**

Conference co-chair June Thompson, technical specialist, CAE Systems Analysis CAD/CAD/NDE Department Automatic Transmission Engineering Operations, Ford Motor Company, Detroit, said, “The goals of SWE’s Annual Conference are to educate, motivate, and inspire women engineering professionals, educators, and students to work together to aim high. Attendees can choose from many timely and diverse sessions to broaden technical knowledge, gain a better understanding of engineering’s role in society, and enhance career potential.” These sessions include:

- *Environmental—Is Green in My Future?*, a panel about how the environment is impacted by engineering decisions
- *Patents: What Every Engineer Should Know*, a discussion about the process of obtaining a patent
- *Global Product Development*, using multicultural teams to develop global products that address the consumer needs of various regions
- *Managing Men and Men Who are Older Than You*, a seminar focusing on issues vital to men and women successfully working together

- *Bridging Cultural Barriers—Bringing Minorities into Engineering*, a discussion on replicating and encouraging underrepresented groups into engineering
- *Engineering Motherhood*, a seminar on Lillian Gilbreth, SWE's first honorary member, an expert on time efficiency and the wife and mother featured in the classic book and film, *Cheaper by the Dozen*
- *Balancing Work and Family*, a discussion on a topic many believe to be of primary concern to all women professionals and employers in general
- *Recognition Awards*. During the Conference, SWE will present its annual Achievement Award and Upward Mobility Award, as well as a number of other memorial and association honors
- Tours of a special historical exhibit at the SWE Archives, housed at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Detroit's Wayne State University

#### **Featured Speaker and Student Activities**

Conference co-chair Alison Holmes, supervisor of Lincoln Mercury Hydraulic Steering Systems, Ford Motor Company, Detroit, said, "The Conference Career Fair and Exhibits are key ways to introduce young women to 'the art of engineering' as a reason why this profession is a positive career option. Featured speaker Sally Ride personifies this goal, not only through her historic ride aboard the space shuttle Challenger, but also through her post-NASA career, which focuses on encouraging young women to study science and math."

Since retiring from NASA in 1987, Ride has devoted herself to education, first for two years as a Science Fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University, then for 10 years as director of the California Space Institute and professor of physics at the University of California, San Diego. In 1999, Ride joined space.com, a website about the space industry, where she was president for one year. She then initiated and headed EarthKAM, an Internet-based NASA project that allows middle-school classes to shoot and download photos of the Earth from space.

Her most recent enterprise is Imaginary Lines, an organization founded to provide support for all the girls who are, or might become, interested in science, math, engineering, and technology. One instrument of this mission is the Sally Ride Club, created for upper elementary and middle school girls across the country.

Throughout the Conference, a Career Fair and Exhibits—more than 10,000 square feet of display space occupied by more than 275 major employers—will provide information for potential employees,

including students and educators.” In addition, a number of daily programs are education-driven. They include:

- *Explore Engineering*, sponsored and coordinated by Raytheon. A special appearance by Bill Nye, “The Science Guy” from PBS, is scheduled on Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., targeted to middle and high school students, as well as children of attendees.
- *Career Guidance Workshop and Ideas Exchange*. Brief presentations of fun and exciting career guidance programs, along with an open dialogue.
- *Program Development Grant Presentations*. Awardees of these grants share their program ideas with fellow SWE members who, in turn, can use them in their sections.
- *Outstanding Student Section Competition*. The top student sections with programs that support SWE’s objectives and reach a high percentage of participation will be recognized.

### **The Society of Women Engineers**

SWE’s mission is to stimulate women to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders; to expand the image of the engineering profession as a positive force in improving the quality of life, and to demonstrate the value of diversity. The National Conference shines the spotlight on all aspects of this mission and emphasizes the important accomplishments and objectives of the association and its members.

Headquartered in Chicago, SWE—the largest organization devoted to promoting the advancement of women in engineering—was founded in 1950, and has a membership of more than 15,000 individual professionals and students from 22 countries. The roots of the organization go back to its university student founders, and there are more than 300 student sections in SWE today. The lifeblood of the organization today, however, is its nearly 100 professional sections organized in 10 geographic regions.

A full Conference schedule and a registration form appear on [www.swe.org](http://www.swe.org). Online registrations will be taken through September 27. For further information, contact [nationalconference@swe.org](mailto:nationalconference@swe.org). SWE Headquarters are at 230 E. Ohio St. #400, Chicago, IL 60611 Telephone: (312)596-5223, fax: (312)644-5252.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: You are cordially invited to attend/cover the SWE 2002 National Conference. For registration and credentials information, contact Rosalie Harris:Creative Solutions, [rhcs@aol.com](mailto:rhcs@aol.com) or (312)642-2163.