

FERNANDO “FRANK” CALDEIRO

1958 – 2009



Courtesy of NASA

A lead astronaut at NASA, Fernando Caldeiro was the first person of Argentinian descent to train for a space flight.

Caldeiro was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. At 16, he moved with his family to New York, speaking no English at the time. He graduated from high school in Long Island City and in 1978 earned an associate degree in applied science in Aerospace Technology from New York State University at Farmingdale. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in science from the Universities of Arizona and University of Central Florida, respectively.

From 1985 through 1988, Caldeiro worked as a test director for Rockwell International. In 1988, he was transferred to the Kennedy Space Center to serve as a space shuttle propulsion system specialist. In 1991, he was hired by NASA as a cryogenics and propulsion systems expert, taking part in 52 space shuttle launches.

In 1996, he was selected as an astronaut and served as the lead astronaut in charge of shuttle software testing from 2005 through 2006.

In 2002, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on the Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. He died in 2009, at age 51, following a 2 ½-year battle with brain cancer.



(Top) Frank Caldeiro's class at NASA's Johnson Space Center, 1996, at the beginning of the lengthy training and evaluation period. The 44 astronaut candidates were selected from among 2,400 applicants.



(Left): Caldeiro and fellow astronaut candidates during their weightlessness familiarization training flight aboard NASA's KC-135 aircraft.

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