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## Launch into history with Lemasters' memoir 'The Step'

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Martha Lemasters' inspirational memoir, "The Step: One Woman's Journey to Finding her Own Happiness and Success During the Apollo Space Program," tells the real story of her life as a single mother of three daughters working at the Kennedy Space Center during the Apollo years.

Underlying themes of women's issues and equality intertwine with history, science, humor and romance as Lemasters makes her way through the obstacles of life on her journey to happiness and triumph.

Lemasters is a first-hand witness to the historical events that took place in the 1960s and '70s as NASA and the Launch Support Team made the extraordinary achievement of landing a man on the moon.

The memoir also talks about the lack of recognition of the thousands of unsung heroes that made up the support team of brilliant engineers, analysts and programmers, writers, secretaries and typists. This dream team did things that had never been done before, working around the clock behind the scenes to make this game-changing feat happen. "I worked for IBM in public relations during those years as part of the Launch Support Team. I started out as a typist and worked my way up to my dream job of becoming a writer," said Lemasters.

This first-time author started the book in 1979 after the Apollo program ended. She started out writing the book in the third person, but an editor friend of hers told her it had to be written as a memoir in the first person. "I had to be honest and vulnerable. That was easy because it's not a perfect life and it's about somebody who made mistakes on her journey. I believe that bad choices are not life sentences. They are life lessons," said Lemasters.

They were exciting times. "The commitment was intense. People had affairs, people died. The Cape area had the largest divorce rate in the country at the time because of the long hours everyone had to put in."

Her husband worked on the space program as well.

"He was on the launch team for John Glenn's mission. We grew apart and eventually got divorced after we had our three daughters. So I was left a single mother who had to work, and in those days it was not the norm," said Lemasters.

In addition to overcoming the negative social aspect of being a single mom in the '60s, Lemasters also had to deal with being a woman in a male-dominated workplace. "There were about 17,000 people working at the Space Center on any given day, and only 3,000 of them were NASA employees. The ratio of men to women was also about 200:1. We were also considered a safety hazard. We could not wear dresses or mini-skirts anywhere in the vehicle assembly building (VAB). We had to don coveralls instead and that eventually led me to get in some trouble and lose my badge until I went through a safety training course," said Lemasters.

There are many stories of the trials and tribulations of Lemasters and all of the people who dedicated 10-plus years of their lives to achieve what was the biggest historical event since the allies won WWII.

As a marketing and communications writer, Lemasters was able to write about the people who made up one of the greatest technical teams ever assembled in American history. Stories of their heartaches, challenges, achievements and failures are so inspiring, "The Step" will have you laughing and crying throughout.

Lemasters recently visited the Kennedy Space Center with relatives and found the visit to the Saturn V exhibit heartbreaking. "I looked at the vehicle and there was no indication whatsoever of whom the contractors were for each stage of the Saturn V. The Apollo program was a team effort. NASA did not accomplish this

mission all on their own, yet there was no mention of all the others who contributed to getting man on the moon – Boeing, IBM, North American, McDonnell-Douglas – nothing," said Lemasters. "What about the 17,000 others that made up the greatest technological team ever assembled, achieving the most difficult challenge of all mankind to date!"

The names of the astronauts will forever be inscribed in our history books, but the names of the entire Apollo Launch Support Team will only be known to a few. NASA is dedicating an entire building to Heroes and Legends ... again, just about the astronauts.

"If NASA really wants to get this place right, then history has to also be right," said Lemasters. "Why not dedicate a whole wing to the team? And discover what it means to have 'The Step.'"

Martha Lemasters will be at the Vero Beach Book Center on April 6 at 4 p.m. for a talk and book-signing of her memoir, The Step. Visit her website [www.marthalemasters.com](http://www.marthalemasters.com) for more book-signing dates and information on where you can purchase her memoir.

### About the Author

Martha Lemasters is a Floridian, raised in Ft. Lauderdale and now residing in Vero Beach. During the late 1950s she attended the University of Florida, majoring in Journalism.

Since retirement, she volunteered for the State Attorney's Office as a victim advocate for six years. During this time, she hosted several concerts for victims entitled "Vero Sings for the Victims."

Lemasters is a member of Impact 100, a women's collective giving group whose members each donate \$1,000 a year and award grants to nonprofits in the community.

She served on the board as vice president of communications for five years.

Lemasters also writes a bi-weekly inspirational column on behalf of the Christian Science church.



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