Nichelle Nichols’ ashes will voyage to space aboard a Vulcan rocket

The ashes of Nichelle Nichols, the actress who played Lieutenant Nyota Uhura in the original *Star Trek*, will get sent into deep space on a rocket that memorializes her and several other *Star Trek* veterans (via *Reuters*). Nichols’ son, Kyle Johnson, donated her ashes after she died in July at age 89.

Nichols’ ashes will head to space on a rocket fittingly called the Vulcan Centaur, with the memorial spaceflight company, Celestis, running the “Enterprise Flight” mission. There still isn’t a set date for the send-off, and it will likely depend on the United Launch Alliance’s ongoing development of the Vulcan rocket.

During the mission, Nichols will be joined by the remains of *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry and his wife, Majel Barrett, who starred as the series’ nurse Christine Chapel. James Doohan, who played the Enterprise’s engineer, Scotty, and the visual effects artist Douglas Trumbull, who’s known for his work on *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, *Blade Runner*, and more, will also be on board.

When the rocket takes off from Cape Canaveral, it will carry over 200 capsules containing ashes, DNA samples, as well the names, messages, and pictures provided by users from around the globe. Celestis will store the capsules in the rocket’s upper stage, which will get sent between 150 million and 300 million kilometers into space and orbit the Sun.

Nichols was a pioneer in the film industry and became the first Black woman to hold a major role on television. Her legacy extends off-screen too, as she served as an advocate for NASA to encourage the recruitment of astronauts from underrepresented backgrounds. She’s credited with helping get the first Black man, Colonel Guion Bluford, and the first woman, Sally Ride, to space.

https://www.theverge.com/2022/8/28/23325680/nichelle-nichols-star-trek-ashes-space-vulcan-centaur-celestis