

Hawaii

Lt. Col. Ellison S. Onizuka
NASA Astronaut



Hometown: Kona, Big Island Hawaii
Nominated by: Hawaii 4-H Association
Year Inducted: 2002

4-H Projects: Swine, Fryer project, gardening, fruits, trees, electricity

4-H Honors: President of the State 4-H Federation 1963-64. Delegate to the State 4-H Ahaeolelo Conference 1963 & 1964. Delegate to the National 4-H Conference in Washington DC, 1963. As Outstanding 4-H'er in the State, received \$500.00 scholarship from Standard Oil, 1964. Participated in the production of the 4-H television series "Blue Sky Below My Feet." After his death, The Onizuka 4-H Fund for Excellence was established to provide Science and Technology scholarships to youth and support 4-H leadership development in the states.

Ellison Onizuka grew up on coffee farm in rural Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii. He was actively involved in many youth activities, including 4-H, basketball, Boy Scouts (an Eagle Scout award winner), school newspaper, and treasurer of his class. As a fifth grader, he announced he planned to be an engineer and went on to University of Colorado at Boulder to study aerospace engineering. In 1978, he was selected by NASA to be an astronaut. Onizuka was the first Japanese-American and the first native Hawaiian to fly in space. On his first mission in January, 1985, he carried three 4-H flags.

Onizuka said 4-H helped him to develop self-confidence, the ability to achieve, and a spirit of exploration and challenge. He talked to young people and encouraged them to strive for excellence. He taught about space: what it was like to fly and how the borders of countries disappeared and the world became a single space for all people. He shared the wonders of space, the challenge of exploration and the need to take risks. He was actively involved in the 4-H video series "Blue Sky Below My Feet - Adventures in Space Technology." Onizuka was a member of the heroic crew that died aboard the shuttle Challenger in January, 1986.

"Always strive for excellence, dream big dreams and go after these dreams with sweat and commitment. 4-H has helped me to achieve and develop confidence and decide on my future career in aerospace. I am thankful for all those people back home that supported me to make my dreams possible."



Onizuka helped relate 4-H projects to space technology in 4-H's "Blue Sky Below My Feet - Adventures in Space Technology." [NASA photo]