



Janet Guthrie

Janet Guthrie was the first woman to race in the Indy 500. After graduating from the University of Michigan in 1960 with a B.Sc. in physics, she was hired by Republic Aviation in Farmingdale, New York, as a research and development engineer, where she worked on programs that led up to Project Apollo. But Janet, who was also a pilot, had an adventurous spirit, and in 1964 she applied for the first Scientist-Astronaut program, hoping to be able to travel into space. She made it through the first round of eliminations, but was ultimately cut from the program because she didn't have a PhD. Around the same time, she bought her first race car, a Jaguar XK 12 and was competing in races several years later, winning two Sports Car Club of America races. Racing captured her imagination and fit her personality more than physics, and by 1972, racing was her full-time occupation. She

posted two class victories in the 12 Hours of Sebring, but she broke into the big leagues of racing in 1976 when long-time team owner and car builder Rolla Vollstedt asked her to test a car for the Indianapolis 500. In the same year, Janet became the first woman to compete in a NASCAR Winston Cup superspeedway stock car race. Throughout 1977 she continued to break the gender barrier, qualifying for and competing in both the Indianapolis 500 and at the Daytona 500, where she was Top Rookie. The following year she finished ninth in the Indianapolis 500, driving with a broken wrist. Want to learn more about Janet Guthrie? Check out her autobiography, *Janet Guthrie: A Life at Full Throttle*, published by Sport Classic Books in 2005. You can also visit the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. where the helmet and suit that Guthrie wore in her first Indy race are on display.

1. What is the central ideas of the article?

2. Summarize the article.
