

## Poppy Northcutt

*Onetime rocket scientist, sometime lawyer, full time feminist activist.*



Poppy is currently the President of both the Houston Area Chapter of NOW and of Texas State NOW. The National Organization for Women, Inc. (NOW) is the oldest and largest grassroots, multi-issue women's rights organization in the United States. She previously served on the national board of directors of NOW in the 1970's. In the 1970's she was also the founding chair of the Harris County Women's Political Caucus, the first Women's Advocate for the City of Houston, and a special conference consultant to the U.S. Department of State -- IWY Commission organizing the National Women's Conference which was held as the U.S. Observance of International Women's Year. She was the co-coordinator of the Texas Women's Credentials Challenge during the 1972 Democratic National Convention. This credentials challenge was part of a national effort on the part of the Women's Political Caucus to increase the representation of women as delegates at all levels of the Democratic Party. She currently serves as a volunteer deputy voter registrar and as a Democratic Party precinct chair in Harris County.

In her early career Poppy worked as a return-to-earth specialist on the Apollo Program. With the flight of Apollo 8, she became the first woman in an operational support role to work in NASA's Mission Control Center. She was a member of the mission operations team that received the Presidential Medal of Freedom for the rescue of Apollo 13. She also received the Apollo Achievement Award and the "Silver Snoopy" flight safety award for her work on Apollo 11. Poppy was in the Mission Control Center during the Apollo 8, 10, 11, 12, & 13 missions.

In mid-life, Poppy attended law school at the University of Houston Law Center where she graduated *summa cum laude*. She clerked for a federal appellate judge and then prosecuted and later defended criminal cases. While working as a prosecutor she was instrumental in starting the Domestic Violence Unit at the Harris County District Attorney's Office where she served as the unit's first felony prosecutor. In private practice, she specialized in criminal trial and appellate work mainly handling serious felonies including capital murder cases. Now semi-retired, she is a referral lawyer for Jane's Due Process, a non-profit organization that provides legal services for pregnant teenage girls.

Poppy frequently speaks on women's rights issues and on the role of women in the space program. She has been featured in numerous magazine and newspaper articles and in several documentaries about the space program including "Makers: Women Who Make America," "NOVA: Apollo's Daring Mission," and the upcoming documentary "American Experience: Chasing the Moon."

### **Contact info:**

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