



John Glenn: A Memoir

John Glenn, Nick Taylor

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He was the first American astronaut to orbit the Earth. Nearly four decades later, as the world's oldest astronaut, his courage riveted a nation. But these two historic events only bracket a life that covers the sweep of an extraordinary century. In this engrossing book, John Glenn tells the story of his unique life--one lived at the center of a momentous time in history by a man who helped shape that history.

He is the kind of hero who resists being called a hero. And yet his exploits in the service of his country, his dedication to family and friends, and his rock-ribbed traditional values have made this small-town boy from the Midwest a true American icon.

John Glenn's autobiography spans the seminal events of the twentieth century. It is a story that begins with his childhood in New Concord, Ohio, in the aftermath of World War I. It was there that he learned the importance of family, community, and patriotism. Glenn saw firsthand the ravages of the Depression and learned that determination, hard work, and teamwork could overcome any adversity. These were the values he carried with him as a Marine fighter pilot during World War II and into the skies over Korea, for which he would be decorated for his courage, dedication, and sacrifice. Glenn flew missions with men he would never forget, from baseball great Ted Williams to little-known heroes who would never return to their families. Always a gifted flier, it was during the war that he contemplated the unlimited possibilities of aviation and its next frontiers: speed and space.

John Glenn takes us into the cockpits of the experimental planes and spacecraft he flew to experience the pulse-pounding excitement of the early days of jet aviation, including his record-setting transcontinental flight in an F8U Crusader in 1957, and then on to his selection for the Project Mercury program in 1959. We see the early days of NASA, where he first served as a backup pilot for astronauts Alan Shepard and Gus Grissom and helped refine some of the initial cockpit and control designs for the Apollo program. In 1962 Glenn piloted the Mercury-Atlas 6 *Friendship 7* spacecraft on the first manned orbital mission of the United States. Then came several years in international business, followed by a twenty-four-year career as a U.S. senator--and in 1998 a return to space for his remarkable *Discovery* mission at the age of seventy-seven.

This extraordinary book captures the unique alchemy that brings a man to the forefront of his time. Married to a woman he first met when they were both toddlers, known for his integrity, common sense, and leadership in the Senate, John Glenn tells a story that we must hear. For this narrative of steadfastness, devotion, courage, and honor is both a great adventure tale and a source of powerful inspiration for an age that needs John Glenn's values more than ever before.

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