



^ **Adriana Marais - Doctor in Quantum Physics**

Since childhood, Adriana Marais has dreamed of living on another planet. This dream is close to being realised, as she is one of the 100 Mars One Project astronaut

candidates in the running to move to the Red Planet in 2026.

"I hope one day to continue my research on Mars, and possibly even contribute to the discovery of evidence

that life once existed there," says Marais of her plans.

"I believe that education comes with the responsibility to share knowledge, and while still on Earth, I am actively involved in the promotion of science and space exploration as Special Project Coordinator for the Foundation for Space Development South Africa, an exciting initiative of which is the Africa2Moon project."

According to Marais, we are living in a unique point in the world's history, having reached a time where our activities are having an effect on a global scale, and food, clean water, and fresh air are fast becoming luxuries to which not all of us have access. "In order to sustain our existence on this planet and perhaps others, each one of us needs think carefully about how we can contribute to the solution of the many problems and global issues that exist today."

She continues, "We need to remember what it is that makes us human: to question, to dream, and to try to make the world better."

Marais is not immune to doubting herself: "I don't allow myself to dwell on these thoughts. At the end of the day, persistence and belief in yourself and your visions of the future are the tools with which you can succeed."



^ **Carla Sharpe - Business Manager, SKA**

After studying finance and economics, Charla Sharpe decided to follow her passion: space. "Being a mother, researcher, and driving a career are all priorities that I manage," explains Sharpe.

After completing her space technology course, she, along with her mentor, founded the South African Space Association and later the Foundation for Space Development.

"I, however, had my eye on a bigger target: the MBA in Space Management from the International Space University."

Sharpe completed the programme, and, for the last few years, has had the role of Business Manager at SKA South Africa, the largest science project in Africa.

Sharpe's advice to South African women on National Women's Day is to "find what you love to do or what you are passionate

about and follow that path". She continues, "The world often feels like too big a place with challenges that are too big for one person to take on. The only way to tackle the world, or any challenge in your life, is to make a goal, plan your path to get there, and then just take one step at a time."

To these inspiring women, and to South African women everywhere: happy Women's Day! ■