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Oral history interview with Stanley H. Goldstein
[full name of interviewee]

about Early MSC personnel work - recruiting,
[main focus of interview]

Policies, procedures, problems, pressures.

Title: Personnel,
1962 - PMA Branch
[interviewee's current and/or former title and affiliation]

1968 - Employee Dev + Awards Branch, Personnel Div, Admin

Interview conducted by Robert B. Merrifield, Staff
[interviewer's name/position]

Historian at MSC
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STG recruitment; promotion on joining STG

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INTERVIEW WITH STANLEY H. GOLDSTEIN
August 29, 1968

78 I joined the Space Task Group in Virginia in August of 1961. At that
time the personnel staff consisted of Burney Goodwin and John Vincent.
It's interesting the way I was selected because it is indicative of the
79 kind of thing we were doing to get people. With Project Mercury, the
80 name of the game was get people at any cost and any way possible. I was
working at Great Lakes for the Navy and one of the fellows in the train-
ing office there left to take a job at Norfolk. Prior to accepting this
job he sent applications to a number of places including Space Task Group.
He joined Norfolk one day and the following day received a call from the
then personnel director, Burney Goodwin, and was asked if he was interes-
ted in joining the Space Task Group. He said he had received a job with
the Navy at Norfolk and wasn't interested. He was then asked if he knew
of anybody else that might be interested and he mentioned me and Jack
Cairl. Burney Goodwin then called us to see if we were interested. At
that time the magic of Project Mercury was quite a drawing card and both
Jack and I were tremendously interested. At Burney's request we completed
applications and several days after Burney received our applications he
called our boss, got some performance information, and shortly after that
offered us a job. Both Jack and I went down to be interviewed. There
was no interview requirement--we had had the job offer, but we felt we
wanted to look the situation over. Space Task Group was recruiting very
actively and in many cases was deviating from accepted personnel practices.
It wasn't recruiting on a particularly logical, well thought-out basis--
just for bodies. Whereas normally we should have been called for an inter-

view prior to any offer, we were given the offer first and it was only on our request that we were interviewed.

78 We went to Langley, and when we got there we were told that Burney Goodwin was no longer the personnel director, but that Stu Clarke had been selected as his replacement. We liked what we saw, although we recognized that we were getting into an organization that was pretty confused, because 79 of the major expansion that was accompanying the evolution of this program. There was going to be a lot of things that would be pretty hard to adjust to, and the contrast between what we were leaving--a staid old line Navy organization to go into something like this--was quite a shock, but we were still willing to accept it.

80 Initially, many of the people that were selected to staff the Space Task Group came from other Federal Agencies. Sometimes a change from a staid conservative, DOD kind of organization to something which was wild and free flowing like the Space Task Group was not so successfully accomplished by the individual. One tends to bring with him some of the conservatism--the rules, regulations and procedures--from the organization that he is leaving, especially when that was a Government organization. STG management was conscious of this fact, but they felt that they couldn't be picky because they needed people immediately.

79 There was also another aspect that I think was important. At that time I was a GS-11. I had been in grad just one year when I reported for duty. I had asked if I could be transferred with a promotion and was told I could. The promise was honored when I joined the Space Task Group. This business of promoting on joining a new organization is not sound personnel practice. It is an indication that STG was so anxious to get people that

it was willing to abrogate the prevailing rules of management, and just good common sense.

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In August 1961 there were maybe 600 or 800 people on board. Our personnel staff formed rather quickly around a nucleus of Huntsville people. Our sole interest at that time was recruiting. As a matter of fact, when I initially talked to Burney Goodwin while still back at Great Lakes and asked him about being promoted on the transfer, his comment was "let's see--you are an 11 now, and a journeyman recruiter is worth a 12"--the point being that his primary interest in me was not a personnel management specialist or a personnel officer but as a recruiter. That became a definite focal point. Our office was initially organized in the same kind of service arrangement that we now have, only at that time it was limited to administrative organizations--supply, logistics and other services.

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Since the primary role of the personnel specialist at that time was recruiting and now ~~having~~ having a lot of experience to fall back on within NASA as to how to do it, we set up our own groundrules. I spent most of my day doing the quasiprofessional work that now is done by our placement people. We would phone potential leads, get people to come for interviews, making sure that the forms that were required were properly filled in, and in processing requests for personnel action. It required a rather high degree of clerical accuracy, something that is not particularly my forte. Nor was it the type of duty relished by most of us in the personnel office at that time. As a result, we made a lot of mistakes. We made some clerical mistakes and we made some mistakes in judgement. One particularly serious mistake I made involved a contact with a lawyer from a different agency. He was interested in a job and I called him up and had him come down for

an interview. He was interviewed by Dave Lang for a job in procurement and was accepted. I processed the form 52 and brought the guy on board. Everything was fine, until a couple of days later I was called in Stu's office and got chewed out. In the first place, lawyers are hired on a special appointment which does not intitle them to status. That is, they can't be transferred from one agency to another. They have to be reappointed, and I brought the guy in on a transfer, which was strictly illegal. Secondly, there was some real question as to whether we could have paid his travel which I authorized to be paid. In the third place, Wes Hjernevik did not want lawyers in the Procurement Division. He wanted procurement people in Procurement and lawyers in the Legal Office, so I had touched an exposed nerve in three specific areas.

Based on a management decision, it was decided to stop what is now the Administrative Directorate first.

The drive to get people on board overshadowed common sense and even the best kind of organization. [^] We could have organized the work a lot differently, gotten the Personnel professional to do more professional work and be less concerned about clerical details. That kind of think happened not infrequently. During the first few months I noticed that I was not nearly as responsive to the needs of our line people as they felt I should be. I was doing such things as losing applications, botching up the form 52, and not keeping my line supervisors informed as to the status of a particular personnel action. As a result of this, several things happened. I was taken off that assignment because I was just not hacking it and I was given to the Gemini Program Office. I was roundly chewed out, and third and most important, of all, Stu Clarke and Bob Zimmerman, his deputy, recognized that they were not using their personnel people. This led to the hiring of high level clerical people to accomplish much of this detailed placement work.

At the time we moved to Houston we were deluged with applications. Jack Cairl and I came just after Al Shepard's mission and right before Gus Grissom's. After each of their missions and after John Glenn's, the applications flowed in. From that point on it was a matter of picking and choosing people. Unfortunately neither we nor the operating people had very good insight as to what was needed. In part this was because the mission was expanding. It was now no longer just Mercury but instead Mercury, Gemini and Apollo. The Personnel Office gave little or no thought as to how it should be organized to accomplish its mission and without it, it wasn't possible to tell what kind of skills were needed. Technical managers would express a general feeling that they were going to need a certain number of people, but were not really sure what they were going to do. Nevertheless, we were expected to hire them and pay whatever the going rate was. And this we did. Of course the problem with that is that when an organization crystalizes and becomes more stable, suddenly the supervisor finds he has an overload of skills that are really not as usable as he thought they would be, and also has a very bad grade structure in his organization and in the Center in general. These were the kinds of things that really weren't considered, or if they were considered, they certainly weren't considered very seriously at that time. We hired people irrespective of grade level.

I took over servicing the Gemini and Mercury program offices around November 1961. By that time the decision had already been made to go to Houston. Within the Gemini Program Office there were two distinct groups of people. There was one group that we hired from the outside to accomplish the Gemini mission, and the second group was the former STG people.

I worked primarily with Joe Piland and Bud Foster. Joe, of course, was a fine guy to work with and he made things quite easy. My own personnel competence was somewhat improved at that point probably because the numbers of people within the organization I was servicing were considerable less than in the Administrative Directorate. We were doing essentially the same things, and now had the placement people to help us, but I think it is at that point that the recognition came to the technical people that the Personnel Office was able to do a professional job.

131 At about that point in time the main emphasis was switched from getting people to how we were going to accomplish the physical relocation of the people we had in Houston and also how are we going to do this and
132 continue to recruit as we had been doing. One of the key problems involved the filling of clerical positions. To resolve this problem we sent down John Vincent as the personnel officer with the initial complement to Houston. Shortly thereafter Luther Turner joined Vincent, and they spent their time interviewing people at the Carrousel Motel. The fact that MSC was hiring secretarial personnel was announced through the newspapers and they were absolutely flooded with applicants. They spent full time and much more than an ordinary eight hour day talking to clerical applicants, refering them to the line supervisors who were present for interviews and helping the line managers make selections.

203 One of the things that we knew we were going to have to have, and which had just started at Langley was a Board of Examiners. Bud Jones was head of the Board and also one of the earliest personnel people in Houston, since we couldn't hire people unless they were properly rated. Before the Board could be established we had no way to hire all of these

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clericals as permanent employees, so we hired them on temporary appointments. As these temporary appointments ran out, which they did in six months, there was always a huge battle between line management and the Personnel Division. Often these girls had worked out well, but their temporary appointments had expired, and we still didn't have the Board of Examiners organized, or else when they were tested they were not within reach on the register. We then had to get rid of them. This caused a great deal of dissention, and resentment on the part of the managers who felt that Personnel was letting them down in not letting them retain the competent clerical help they needed. At the same time there was pressure to hire. We had all the money and billets we needed, and simply could not hire people fast enough. If this weren't enough of a headache, back at Langley we had to set up procedures for separating those people that chose not to accompany us to Houston. Now most of the professionals did make the move, but not many of the clericals came. I was left at Langley with Burney Goodwin as a mop-up force. We issued letters to all the people who had not gone down to Houston. The letters said that the organization was officially relocated to Houston and they were offered an opportunity to accompany the activity, and if they chose not to, we would try to find jobs for them in the Langley area. If that didn't work then we had to separate the people who refused to accompany the activity.

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There were some clerical people that came with us, and we witnessed a phenomena that probably should have been expected under the circumstances--a number of marriages broke up as a result of the move to Houston--more than seemed possible under normal circumstances. I think the reason for this was many of the women felt the pull of this new exciting dynamic

organization. They were meeting and dealing with people like astronauts and the allure of the home life just didn't compare with that kind of thing. So as a result we ended up having more clerical people make the move than we had expected. By the same token this led to some pretty wild events both before and after the move. Some of the people led the type of wild personal lives that didn't foster a happy home life. Part of that problem was due to the fact that many engineering and management people were forced to spend a lot of their time traveling between Houston and Langley and were away from their homes for long periods of time.

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I came to Houston in late March and at that point the Personnel Division was located in the East End State Bank. This location brought with it numerous problems. Recognizing that the locations we were in were temporary, the question was, where should we live? Does one live around the temporary facilities or near where the Center would eventually be built? Although we had time tables on when Clear Lake Site would be opened, nobody knew for sure if these would be accurate. The fact that we were in temporary facilities far removed from the organizations that we serviced caused an awful lot of wasted motion. There are a lot of things that you can do over the phone but there are a lot of things that have to be done by face to face contact. So we were constantly an organization on the move--back and forth from the Lane Wells Building to the Houston Petroleum Center and wherever else our organizations were located. Wherever the action was, that is where we in Personnel had to be. This created a problem just in the flow of paper work too.

When we moved to Houston, the emphasis was still on recruiting and many of the things we did to get people, we would now look askance at.

There is one particular case that I remember which points this up very well. The Reliability Office had wanted to hire a fellow by the name of George Shigakowa who was working out on the West Coast. Burney Goodwin at that time was out on the West Coast to do some recruiting, but primarily to see Shigakowa who was apparently known to some of our people at the Center. Burney talked to George and George indicated he was interested in employment. He submitted an application and was hired immediately. One of the things we did not do consistently was to check the performance appraisals of applicants prior to hiring them. We did it, but on a random basis, and if we didn't have any performance appraisals we simply ignored it and said that in our infinite wisdom we would certainly have selected only the right people. George came on board and for some reason, after he got on board, we got some performance appraisals and we were shocked at what we found. The performance appraisals yielded information that George was on the verge of getting fired in his current job and we had indications that his performance on previous assignments was very little better. We would not have hired him if we had had this information before hand. Eventually Security got a report on George which proved that he was to some extent an alcoholic and to a large extent incapable of following thru on any assignment. Even in this time of duress when we needed people so badly we certainly would not have hired him. He worked for us for several years and was ultimately removed from the MSC for poor performance. Now this kind of thing happens in all organizations no matter how good performance appraisals are. An organization still ends up getting some lemons; but we had several of these kinds of incidents one after another and this led the management of the Personnel

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Division to put a stop to it. No matter how fast we needed to hire, there was no sense in hiring known lemons. So we changed some of our procedures. As usual in a crash program one tends to overcommit resources, and so we went from one extreme to the other for awhile. For a short period we didn't move unless we had every piece of paper in place, which of course did not meet the requirements of the organizations we were serving as we weren't hiring people rapidly enough. We were safe in this practice but it didn't meet the needs. Eventually it was changed and we came up with a good compromise, in how we handled these cases. We had other problems related to this problem of the crushing immediate staffing need. A good example was a man by the name of Cofield who was hired as a messenger. Cofield came from another federal agency, and we had performance appraisals on him that were bad. We went to the hiring organization with a recommendation for separation action but the supervisor said he didn't care, that he needed someone, and could we get someone else in the same period of time as Cofield? We admitted that we couldn't. So the supervisor insisted that we hire Cofield. A year and a half later this same Cofield was found guilty of misappropriating government equipment (he had actually stolen government equipment, was tried and convicted and has been out of jail about four months now). There were many other examples of where the operating officials knew that an applicant was not satisfactory and yet he would be hired anyway.

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Another consideration that we had once we got down here, was that although the emphasis was strong on hiring we realized that we also had to do something about promoting people we already had. We needed some kind of system. The MSC promotion system has always been an eminently

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fair one (although I don't think too many MSC employees would agree). The decision was made very early that MSC would not go in for a formalized, heavily structured system of promotions. Instead we would let the managers make decisions on who ought to be promoted, which is quite fair since they are the ones that have to be working with the people. So a system of promotions boards was established, not so much on the recommendation of the Personnel Division, but really as a matter of expediency, plus the fact that many of our managers came from the Langley Research Center and that's the way promotions were handled there. Also at IRC the system seemed to be successful.

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One of the problems that Personnel Division encountered, and still does, is an attitudinal problem. Just about all of our top people were former NACA and Langleyites, and as such had a common tendency to regard Personnel's function as purely clerical--to process papers, not get in the hair of the line management, and do what line management wanted to have done. It was difficult initially, even now to some extent, to convince management that the Personnel Office had a meaningful role to play, could help management, and also was there to guard against management breaking some rules and regulations which would ultimately catch up with them. So the feeling that the staff members in Personnel were second class citizens, abounded at that time. They were good for hiring clerks and typists for not for influencing judgement on when you promote, who you promote, what kind of engineering people were needed in the organization and what kind of organization was necessary to accomplish a mission. Now in regard to the promotion procedures, they worked successfully within certain limitations--the limitations being that nobody really knew when

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to promote somebody and nobody really thought about what the promotion of an individual meant in terms of his peer group. So the promotions were helter skelter and to a great extent based on the consideration of whether the individual had a year in grade. If he did, he usually got promoted. This attitude was so prevalent that we in Personnel had numerous complaints from employees at all grade levels to the effect that they had been in grade a year and hadn't been promoted. This frame of reference made it difficult to implement a promotion system based on the recommendation of promotion boards that met periodically. And of course nobody had set guidelines or had any idea of how many 12's, 13's, 14's, 15's, etc. an organization ought to have, how many it could really support, and when an individual ought to be promoted.

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About the time we moved to Houston, we fully implemented the executive salary committee which had been used at Langley, but was very informal. A couple of senior staff members met with Dr. Gilruth and talked about the nominees a few minutes and he would promote a huge list of people by signature. Right after we first came to Houston we held the first really big executive salary meeting to promote 14's and 15's. I worked for days and nights getting together a booklet, which listed the names of the nominees, their experience, and some written recommendation on the part of their supervisors. At that time we thought the book was very large. It is now three times that large.

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At that point we had no limiting factors in terms of money or controls over the numbers of 14's or 15's at the Center. It was catch as catch can. Everybody who was nominated was promoted. There was no doubt about it. Until controls were exercised by BOB, or Headquarters over the

In 1963 and 1964, basically as a result of BOB grade level restrictions (which also included ceilings for total numbers of GS 14 and 15's), the Executive Salary Committee began to perform its true role in screening and approving or disapproving promotion nominations. 13

Agency in general, and to some extent stemming from limited funds, we were able to promote everybody who was nominated for 14 or 15. I don't remember that anybody was turned down at the first two or three meetings. The executive salary committee at that time was a rubber stamp. ↑

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Three or four months after we got to Houston another fellow from Great Lakes by the name of Les Welch, who had joined the Manned Spacecraft Center Personnel Division, forwarded some complaints to the Civil Service Commission. I believe he also sent his complaints to Mr. Webb, and may have (I don't remember) contacted his congressman. His allegations broke upon the Personnel Office like a bombshell sometime during the summer of 1962. He alleged that MSC had broken every rule and regulation of law and conscience in mishandling, not only summer programs but its entire personnel program. In a lengthy letter to NASA Headquarters he made many allegations of wrong doing. As a result, an investigation was held and many people within the Personnel Division were interviewed by an investigator from Marshall, as I remember, who was assigned by NASA Headquarters to investigate these charges. The inquiry found the allegations incorrect. Very frankly this was probably more of a white wash than anything else. No doubt Les Welch, was a real odd character, had high moral standards, but in many respects he was both difficult and intractable. In many of the charges he brought, he was probably more right than wrong. I guess the inspection had to justify the position of the Manned Spacecraft Center at that time. We were still growing, we were still Congress's fair-haired people, we were still running missions, and this was no time to show anything but the good side of the Manned Spacecraft Center. The investigation, however, did really trigger some deep emotional reaction on the

part of our own staff and MSC management. Once the final report of this investigation was made known to Management, Wes Hjernevik came to address the Personnel Division. He stumbled thru his comments which were to the effect, "We knew you would be vindicated. We still know you guys are a great team, and we still want you to work with us." He became very emotional, choked up, and looked like he was about to cry. And I remember thinking to myself--gee, is this the Wes Hjernevik that I've heard so much about. I was quite shocked. Since then, I've dealt with Hjernevik a great deal and have gotten to know him. I now respect him as a phenomenally outstanding man. This shows the depths that were plumbed by this particular investigation or inspection. Shortly after the inspection Welch left of his own accord. Of course we had a problem knowing what to do with him while he was still here. He couldn't be put back to meeting new people when we knew that he felt that our system was illegal and immoral.

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Some time after that, when I'm not certain, we had a Civil Service Commission regularly-scheduled inspection. This inspection showed that we were far from perfect, but it excused just about all the things that we were doing wrong or poorly by saying in effect, that this was a new organization, growing by leaps and bounds, and since no other organization within the government had ever had a mission like this, and in view of these mitigating factors MSC ought to have a little more time to work out its problems. Of course this was what we in Personnel wanted to hear. We were supposed to have a performance evaluation program, but we didn't have time for that. We were supposed to have a good classification program, but we didn't have time for that either. We had to hire people in

order to get to the moon. So although the report was unfavorable, I think it did not come anywhere near creating the same kind of trauma for the organization that the Les Welch affair did.

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Let me mention one other aspect of the promotion procedures and policies of the Manned Spacecraft Center. A particularly good example of what can happen when management allowed the desires of an individual supervisor to override what is actually good sense in promoting people. There was a girl by the name of Julie Watkins who worked for Bob Piland. She was probably a 7, and for some reason they wanted to promote her to a GS-9, to an administrative assistant position. The work came down to me to find some way to promote her. Unfortunately, we had a guideline within the Center that for professional positions in the administrative area the applicant had to pass the Federal Entrance Examination. I made this known to Tom Markley who was at that time working for Piland and his comment was somewhat unprintable but in effect was "baloney--do it." Now it had been continually drummed into us, and certainly I and most of the others in Personnel were in agreement with this philosophy, that we are a service organization and as such we do what the line organization wants down. If it weren't for them we wouldn't be here so we were prone to take a positive attitude toward such requests--and if necessary, find a way to do things. But there are some instances where the line has to be drawn, and this is where I drew the line. I took the request back to the Deputy Director of Personnel, who was then Bob Zimmerman. Zimmerman told me to do it and he would sign the Form 52. I was quite upset, and I guess at that time I began to question whether I was sacrificing my professional integrity in an organization that would allow something like this to be

done. I think that within the Personnel Division there had been an over emphasis on forget-the-dictates-of-your-conscience-and-good-management-and-do-just-what-these-guys-want, and I think as a result morale within the Division was fairly low, even though we recognized the mission of the Center and were all thrilled to be a part of it. (Incidentally, this is the type of thing that prompted Les Welch's allegations.) I went back to Tom Markley and indicated that we would do it, but we needed a strongly supportive personal resume to substantiate that her experience was administrative in nature and therefore qualified her for the GS-9 administrative position. He suggested that I write it for her, to which I replied, baloney, that's her job or your job, but it's not mine. I told him he knew what we needed and if he could get it fine, and if he couldn't to forget it. At that point the professional relationship began to disintegrate rapidly. Since Tom Markley's position was considerably senior to mine, I was placed in an untenable position, and as a result the action was taken out of my hands. I never did see the Form 57. It was approved by Bob Zimmerman, as nobody else would touch it with a ten foot pole. Interestingly enough this one particular case, although we certainly didn't noise it around nor did the organization, was pointed out by secretaries who wished to become administrative people for years afterwards. They would say, if Julie Watkins got promoted, I should be able to do it too. In time, and as our systems and procedures became a little more systemized (maybe rigid would be a better description), this sort of complaint ultimately died out, but it was three or four years before we heard the last of it as an issue. I guess this also is an indication that promotions were granted without any thought to real maximum utilization of

other skills or people in the Center. The one who was on the job would always get it. As a result of this attitude MSC never did publish any promotion announcements. Of course if you know who you are going to promote, there is no purpose in announcing a job; but in terms of good personnel policy it didn't make sense. During the period when the Center was still hiring a lot of people, had a lot of vacancies, and had a lot of high grades available, no formal announcement system was required, but the older we became, the less suitable was this approach. Ultimately we were obliged to change this system and although we attempted to retain its flexibility we also attempted to rid it of its handicaps.

730 In March of 1962 I got a new assignment to service the Flight Operations Division. At that time Personnel was organized into three personnel management branches. One headed by Jack Cairl, one by Dick Kuhn, and one by Joe Galloway. They were just GS-13's at the time, and the thought was that all these jobs could go to GS-14 level. I was on Joe Galloway's team. Because it was difficult to coordinate what was going on in the branches when Joe Galloway left, the three were merged into one branch with Jack Cairl as branch chief. There were several teams within the branch. We still use that team structure. A team leader supervises a number of personnel management specialists, all of whom are responsible for certain organizations within the Center.

730 Servicing Flight Operations was wild. It was an organization directly related to flight schedules and missions. It needed people as probably no organization in the Center did, and had the most obvious justification--without people it couldn't meet mission schedules and the Center wouldn't get to the moon by 1970. Our real interest continued to

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be recruiting in Flight Operations, although by this time it had slacked off in other organizations. My mission there was to learn the needs of the organization and recruit against these needs. In connection with that recruiting, and as a part of the overall recruiting effort of the Center we did some things that we hadn't done at Langley. For example we got involved with a group I believe was called Careers Incorporated, who would conduct joint advertising coverage for government and non-government aerospace employers. Usually they worked in conjunction with the meeting of a professional society and would screen applicants and get basic information. This data they put into a ticker tape which would go to each organization who was represented. Each organization had a room or suite of rooms and if it's people saw information on the ticker tape that looked interesting, they would phone downstairs to the central point and ask that person to come up for an interview. In order to do this, we relied to some extent on our technical people, but by and large the major effort was performed by Personnel people. A personnel officer knows better what the organization needs in general than any individual branch chief, for example. The latter was interested usually in his own restricted area.

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After this when the personnel management people got into the organizations and really learned what was needed, they were able to contribute more in terms of recruiting. On the first couple of trips I really didn't have this knowledge and we had to have technical people like Chris Critzos and Pete Armitage along to support us. After we talked to the people, if we were interested we would get them to complete applications and send them down to Houston. The line managers would then look at the applica-

tions and make decisions. One of the things we had to do, was act as quickly as possible. This meant that the Board of Examiners which was at that time an arm of the Personnel Division had to react rapidly, rate the applications, and make sure that the score that was given the guy on his application was sufficient so that he would be within reach on the register. Then they would certify his name to us, to the selecting official so that he could be selected. A situation like this was wild. We would come home from one of these recruiting trips armed with either names of people that we would subsequently contact for applications or applications. We had no information as to their previous performance, we had no idea if they were falsifying their applications, and we had to rate their applications in a short time--otherwise we found by experience we would lose these guys. A phenomenally high number of applicants were processed thru the Board.

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We also had another thing going for us and this was the AST Announcement. When NASA was established in 1958, it was recognized very early that we needed top level managers, and we needed the ability not only to pay them well, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of excepted positions (which are like GS-16 positions except that they could be approved at the Agency level), but also we had to be able to react in real time to hire these people. We had to get the job done and move quickly. It was felt that the Civil Service Commission announcement for engineering people didn't possess this ability to move quickly. Also, we had no control over that engineering announcement. We felt that what might very well happen was that if we had someone we wanted to hire whom the commission could not rate high enough to be within reach on the register, it

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would put us in the same fix as every other staid conservative Federal agency. We were not going to be able to react quickly enough. About 1960 NASA convinced the Civil Service Commission that we had a special kind of job to do. Nobody had ever tried to build a spacecraft that would support man in outer space and nobody tried to reach the moon before. We needed special kinds of employees and we could not operate within the traditional confines of Civil Service Commission regulations as they applied to hiring. NASA came up with what was first called the Aerospace Research Scientists Announcement. This ultimately became the Aerospace Technologist Announcement. This announcement, which only NASA could use, had a positive educational requirement--an appropriate degree from an accredited school, and in addition to the degree, if it was more than three years old, there had to be at least one year of appropriate experience within the last three years. This was extremely vague of course--what is appropriate experience in designing and building a spacecraft? This led to all kinds of loopholes, which NASA frankly wanted. It wanted the flexibility to hire people who would be able to do the job. After we got this announcement, one of the jobs of the board of examiners was to hire secretaries. Another, and more important job was to set up procedures whereby we could whip thru applications with the minimum amount of attention to Civil Service Commission regulations and hire engineers using this aerospace technologist announcement. Aiding us in this effort was the fact that our Manned Spacecraft Center personnel office people rated the applications themselves. The board of examiners was sitting with us, and we knew exactly what score we had to give an applicant in order to get him on the register. It may seem like a travesty on a merit system, but it

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got the job done. I think this is another indication that when there is a will, almost anything can be done, and it ~~doesn't~~ work too badly. I don't know that we committed any more sins of omission or commission as a result of this hectic time and this announcement than we would have working under regular Civil Service Commission announcements, and we certainly reacted a lot more quickly.

Shortly after I was assigned to Flight Operations, there was a general Center reorganization and Flight Operations became a directorate. I guess all of us in Personnel, and I in particular, recognized that if I was going to do a job that I considered to be right, and not just process papers, I was going to have to find out what was going on, and what was needed. One of the key people in the shaping of the FOD organization was Chris Critzos, then Kraft's executive assistant. He was my liaison with Kraft and he spent an awful lot of time on Personnel matters. If Chris Kraft said he needed 10 people Critzos would tell me to get 10 people some way, and he was not particularly concerned about the "how." We had many long and bitter arguments. One in particular involved flight controllers. The flight controller function basically isn't an engineering job, or wasn't at that time. His function involved manning a console and he had to have some "sharps." Chris Critzos, reflecting Kraft's instructions told me he wanted engineers. After talking to a number of people I found out what the job was and told Critzos that he didn't need engineers; what he wanted was FAA-type flight controllers or just anybody with capability. I also told him that it was a poor use of engineers. We had long bitter arguments about this, and either Chris Critzos kicked me out of his office or I would hang up on him on the phone. Ultimately

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231 we got Kraft and Hodge together, and forced a decision. We decided that initially we would hire FAA flight controller types and then hire engineers after the initial rush was over. It was somewhat of a compromise. I certainly didn't win the battle. And that is what we did. We went to Oklahoma City and hired a bunch of flight controllers. I recognized full well that if we hired the FAA-type people, and not engineers they would not have the same ladder of progression that engineers would. Hence we would not be able to keep them. This is one of the points that Kraft and Critzos made, quite appropriately. Thus in 1962 and 63 we in Personnel were starting to do more in helping the managers actually make decisions and little less in processing papers.

731 As the organization grew and the flight operations mission became increasingly clear, Kraft as the very good manager that he is, tried to get the word to the divisions that in order to recruit they had to know what they wanted. I worked very closely in developing what kind of people were needed for the directorate. We worked hard with Careers Incorporated, we did some recruiting in consonance with other Centers, and we also went out on our own. We hired some good people as at this time the organizations pretty well knew what they wanted. Kraft also realized that he had to have some kind of procedure and guidelines for promoting people. We worked together effectively in determining who ought to be promoted, when they ought to be promoted and how we ought to promote them. We got this word down to the organization and I think this has been one of the reasons Flight Operations has had very good morale over the years. Kraft was keenly aware of the importance of communications. He might make the wrong decision, but at least everybody knew what it was, which helps

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somewhat.

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In Mission Planning John Mayer had a tremendous need for math aides. These were people who worked with the mathematicians in a subprofessional capacity. The first thing Mayer wanted after arriving in Houston was not engineers or mathematicians but math aides. He needed somebody to do the detail work. At that time there was no way we could hire these people permanently and we had to hire on temporary appointments. We put out the work thru the mass media that we were interested in hiring certain kinds of people and we got many, many, many applicants. Some of the applicants were Negro girls, none of which were hired. One or two wrote to their Congressman saying that there was some real problems here with MSC and its relationships with minority groups. They claimed they were just as qualified as other people who were selected. I think there is some measure of truth in this. It will likely be denied, but the Langley contingent that made up the nucleus of the Manned Spacecraft Center were basically Southern born and bred and had little interest in hiring Negro's. I'm not at all sure that the Congressional investigation changed anybody's opinion, but MSC top management said and did some things which impressed the public at large. This word did not filter down, and it's very hard to change attitudes in regard to the selection of minority group people. The same attitude of minority was prevalent in our college recruiting. We did recruit at Negro universities, but could very seldom get these people selected. For many years here at the Center our ratio of clerical and professional Negroes to white was low.

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We did do an extremely active job in college recruiting. But we needed a great influx of new blood in the organization. We hired people

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from other organizations and from industry and we hired these people who were experienced at high grade levels. This was fine when it is necessary to staff up quickly to do a job, but if we were going to be around for a long period of time we knew we needed some kind of vehicle to get us new blood into the organization. We did this two ways. One was through the establishment of an engineering co-op program, and a more important way was college recruiting. In 1963-1965 we went on an average of probably 110-120 university visits a year. This permitted us to interview many, many people. But the problem was that the engineers who should have been helping us with the recruiting either couldn't be broken free to do it because they had a job to do, or when they were able to do it we did not provide the kind of support we should have. They really didn't know the type of questions these kids usually asked about salary, fringe benefits, etc. In addition, the technical people had a tendency to recruit for his own organization or at best the division, but certainly not the Center as a whole, as we had to do. As a result, ordinarily only the Personnel people made these trips. This had many disadvantages, as we were not able to answer technical questions that these kids had. We answered them in generalities, and we didn't really know what the other organizations in the Center wanted. We each had a tendency to look after our own Directorate. I knew what Flight Ops wanted, but I didn't know what Max Faget's group wanted or any other directorate in the Center. So we all were really not much better than the technical people, and it created some problems in the long run. We probably got a lot of applications, and most of them were very good and yet failed to maximize our own expenditures. It was a tremendously active effort.

Now in regard to the math aides, two facts are important. The first had to do with the hiring of minority people, and the second was that we finally got a number of people hired on a temporary basis. Since we knew ²⁹ these appointments were going to run out in a short period, we began working with Bud Jones and the executive secretary of the board of examiners in terms of establishing a register so that these people could be hired on a permanent appointment. But a register won't allow the supervisor to pick and choose. One has to take whoever is available at the top of the register. So the register was set up and it had many, many people on it. Unfortunately not all these people were working for John Mayer, and from that point on we were in deep trouble. Mayer, who can be somewhat intractable, was mad at Personnel claiming we didn't know what he needed, that we had done a lousy job in getting Suzie Smith, (who happened to be 43rd on the register of 45 people), etc. The problem lay in the fact that the announcement required a written test. We tried to establish a register in a timely manner, which didn't work out well because we didn't get all the people we wanted and it caused a great amount of acrimony between John Mayer's division and me. We ultimately ended up hiring most of these temporaries as permanent employees.

303 In 1964 when we moved to the Clear Lake Site, Jack Cairl became branch chief and he felt that one of the things we could do to provide better service to organizations was to have our personnel people co-located with the operating organization. This was a very good idea and I was the first to be so co-located--with Flight Operations. I was team leader and I moved in with the Flight Operations staff. We wrote a formal mission statement which covered what we were supposed to accomplish,

and was signed by Kraft and Hjernevik. We then became deeply involved in the organization. I had several people working for me, servicing Flight Operations. The main advantage of the system lay in its ability to be more responsive to the needs of the line organization. As part of its staff, I had the signature authority for SF42 up to the GS-13 level. I became their personnel arm and got into many other areas than just personnel. On rare occasions we were brought in to help with reorganizations. As this worked out successfully, both in the eyes of our Personnel Division and Flight Operations, this servicing concept spread to other organizations within the Center.