

**MSFC HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH ART SANDERSON:
INTERVIEW BY ANDREW DUNAR
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DUNAR: Mr. Sanderson, to start out, could you tell us a little bit about your background, how you came involved in personnel issues at Marshall?

SANDERSON: I was with the Seventh Ordinance District in St. Louis, Missouri and I transferred to Huntsville in 1956. Then became involved with personnel at that time as a deputy to a fellow named Bob Noel. I was at that time the organization was the Army Ballistic Missile Agency and it wasn't until 1960 when the people from the Army Missile Agency transferred to NASA if they wanted to go. This later became Marshall Space Flight Center. I have been with personnel with the Ordinance Corp with the finance department in St. Louis back to 1946. Then I came to Huntsville with the Army Ballistic Agency in 1956. Then I transferred to NASA in 1960. I personnel officer then and had responsibilities with labor relations ..?classification.

DUNAR: Were you involved in recruiting engineers and so-forth under ABMA?

SANDERSON: Yes. We had recruiting teams that went out to the universities to recruit engineers all over the country. That was pretty attractive (I thought) college recruitment program. I have forgotten now how many colleges and universities that we visited, but it was a large number all over the United States. We would bring engineers and people in from all the United States, not just from this area. That recruitment program I felt was very well done.

DUNAR: How did the relationship work between the new young American engineer you were bringing in and the Germans who were in many of the Director positions under the ABMA?

SANDERSON: I believe the former German scientists believed in bringing the young blood in. As a matter of fact, as I recall we even did some recruiting in Germany. I am not

sure. They wanted top-notch engineers and we had a charter to go all over this country to get them. I feel like they were well accepted. The young engineers of course, had a long way to go, but the former Germans were very talented, skilled, lot of ability. They never did, in my judgement, look down on the young engineers at all. They just encouraged them and brought them along. That's my opinion.

DUNAR: What was the difference in personnel policies under the Army with ABMA and under NASA once Marshall was established?

SANDERSON: Well actually, personnel policies haven't changed in I don't know when. I have a book of personnel policies and procedures that I wrote in 1946 and I could dust that off and probably most of it would still be good today. So personnel policies over the years basically have not changed a lot, in my judgement. There have been some take-offs on some of the personnel policies, some of the salary structures have changed. Some of them have changed since I left the government. By and large all the programs that you had back in the ABMA days, you still have it in NASA days. Maybe it was a little bit more sophisticated, a little bit different. The salary structure, we required for our engineers that they have a degree from an accredited university. Before that time, I believe, they could have passed an examination in the state of Alabama and be recognized as an engineer in the state of Alabama. That may even be true today with the Army. But NASA in their effort to try to get degreed people, had a requirement that anything other than construction engineers didn't have to have a degree. Construction engineers could have a passed an exam of the state and we could still hire them, but we wouldn't be able to hire them as what we called AST engineers. I have forgotten what AST stands for. It was a pay structure that was peculiar to NASA. Probably still is. I imagine they still have that. In order for you to be an AST person, engineer, or accountant, chemist or whatever, you (at that time) had to have a degree from an university. Now I understand that you can be, I don't have any facts on this, but you can now, if you are accepted by an university in their school of engineering or someplace, you can be classed as an AST. The major difference probably was just in the

engineering structure between the ABMA and Marshall. I felt that NASA had a very sophisticated program in the personnel area. I think that we tried to make it as professional as possible. Not that we didn't try to make it professional in the ABMA. We tried to make it as professional as possible in order to make it attractive to deal with these high level engineers. We think there was even a time when you had a certain grade (grades in school were pretty important to us) in school. I thought it was a very professional program. We worked very hard with the scientist and organizations that we had to try and get them the kind of people that they needed to do the job that they were chartered to do. I think we had a lot of success.

DUNAR: How did the transition from the personnel perspective work from the ABMA to NASA?

SANDERSON: Well, it was just kind of a transfer of people who wanted to go. I think everybody was probably asked if they wanted to go. It was kind of an individual choice. Some people stayed with the Army, but most of the people came with NASA that were with the Army Ballistic Missile Agency.

It was a very easy transitional period. No flack, no problems that I can recall. There was no administrative problems.

DUNAR: One of the things that we are looking at is the Civil Rights issue, which became an issue it appears from what we have seen so far in about 1963 from Marshall's perspective. James Webb gave a speech directing that Marshall would have to make some progress to overcome the Alabama image during this civil rights period. Can you describe what that was like from your perspective?

SANDERSON: I think there was that kind of image created outside of Alabama on the part of people in Washington that were 700 miles away. I never did feel like the image that was described was honestly described about the people and the functions and that sort of thing in north Alabama. I never did feel that the north Alabama (along in here, the Tennessee Valley) should have been accused of some of the things that they were accused

of. See, we brought people into this area from all over the country. All cultures. They were not just Mississippians, Alabamians, Tennesseans. They were from all over, Boston, from the major big schools. From California, Florida. We brought people with all different cultures came in to make up the ABMA and later kept doing this with the NASA, Marshall Space Flight Center. You have got all these cultures coming in here and they weren't coming into Birmingham or Selma or someplace else down there, they were coming into here. I always felt that the people who came in here were a little bit above, quite a bit above the accusations that were being thrown about civil rights and that sort of thing to Alabama. It may have been true somewhere south of here. It was not true here. There was a cultural mix that kept it from happening. I came here from St. Louis. People in the personnel office came here from all over. The same is true for all of our engineers, they came from all over the place, all over the country. They just brought with them what their cultural feelings was in Washington state or North Dakota. If they hated minorities in those areas, they would come on down here hating them. But I never felt that they did. I felt that everybody was here to do a job. We really didn't have time for that kind of business. We didn't have the numbers of minorities that Webb thought we should have. They went to work on that and recruited some minority schools. At that time, even though it was true, nobody accepted it as an excuse. There were not the kind of minorities coming out of the universities that we were looking at. There weren't engineers coming out in 1960 and 61. There were not accountants coming out, degreed people. We were looking for degreed people. Eventually it caught up. Eventually there were a lot of degreed people. Some of the schools, like A&M probably have some sort of reciprocal obligation or some reciprocal with Georgia. There were things that the school systems had to do to qualify minorities in and out. I feel like when they did that, and we were looking for certain percentages, then it made us look a little better. NASA, Marshall and a lot of government agencies, and maybe industry, didn't look as good then and maybe not as good now as some civil rights people think we should, but I think there has been a lot of progress.

DUNAR: There was another point to that Dr. von Braun made in some of his response to some of these directives from Webb and other people at headquarters, saying not only that there weren't the engineers with the degrees among blacks increasing at the time, but also that when there were in other parts of the country it was often difficult to attract them to Alabama because of the image, rightly or wrongly.

SANDERSON: Even trying to attract them into government, because by this time industry was getting some feed too. They at that time could pay them more money than we could in civil service. We were kind of low man on the totem pole when it came to attracting these minorities, these kids that did get out of school into the Marshall Space Flight Center. They had 400 places where they could stop off between where they lived and when they got here. That is true and we felt that. "We" being those people who would closely around, me von Braun and others. We may still have a little bit of that problem today. I don't really know because I am not as heavily involved in that kind of recruiting right now. I haven't been since I left the government. I did go to work for a minority company after I retired from NASA. I worked for that minority group for seven years. We didn't have the minority problem at that company. Then I became involved in doing some work on my own as a management consultant for a telephone company up in Tennessee. I did some consulting work for others too, including this company. I had been away from the recruiting arena for a while. I think, (I don't know if this is timely) but in 1971-72, I spent out in the University of Oklahoma working on my Ph.d. While I was out there I was the director of Mr. Rees, at NASA, Mr. Newby who was head of the administration to contact me to see if I would take a new office they were setting up the Equal Employment Opportunity Office which included contracts administration, so far as minority firms were concerned. How we were doing, how Marshall was doing in terms of minority contractors, how are contractors that were [already] working for NASA doing as far as meeting goals and that sort of thing. It was all tied together. I told them I would take the job. So when I came back I took the job and I kept that job as Director of EEO office until I retired in 1979. That's when I met up

with Jim Rice and some of those people. I knew Jim from the past, he worked with me in personnel some years ago. Jim's the kind of guy I wanted to help me. Clyde Foster, also. We had a pretty good office and that was our function. I had to entirely give Marshall numbers up and tried to get our contractors numbers up.

DUNAR: That raises a couple of questions in my mind. I have heard about earlier, I think in about the mid-60s, there was an effort on the part of some of the contractors in town to already to begin to do something in terms of improving minority recruitment. Was there an organization like that?

SANDERSON: Yes, there was an organization and I think they called it the Huntsville Minority Contractors Organization or something like that.

DUNAR: I heard the name AHAC?

SANDERSON: Yes, that is right. These companies because they had been faced with kind of what we had always been faced with, not enough graduating, not enough qualified. They were being advised you have to up your numbers. So this company was formed by major companies here in town. I have never had an opportunity to see an evaluation of how effective they were. I believe they were kind of effective. They met often, once a month I think.

DUNAR: Who was involved in that?

SANDERSON: Seems like Milton Cummings, way back in the early days was. Mr. King with SCI was. I can't think of all the guys names, but the major companies here in town had representatives. The representatives were the officers, like president, vice-president, head of engineering. They had people on that AHAC group that could make decisions for that company. I believe it was pretty effective. Whether it did all that it was expected to do, I don't know. It gave minority recognition. Visibility is a great thing in any area. If you can get visibility and get people to endorse you that should help. It did do that. It gave minority companies visibility that they hadn't really had before. Mr. Griffin was on that, he

is dead now, but his company is still run by Brown. I am not sure of the name of the company anymore, but they were a minority company.

DUNAR: Was that the main goal, to bring minority companies in to bring business, or for recruitment within the other companies?

SANDERSON: Both. The minority companies wanted their share of the government contracts as support. Meg Griffin and his company was a support contractors for some major companies. Other minority companies were contractors to major companies that had government contracts. I think that is where it all got started, because now within Marshall (the last time I remember) Marshall was obligated to have a certain percentage of their business go to small business. I don't know whether that was small minority business or not, but small business with maybe a percentage of minority, but small business, disadvantage kind. I know NASA even today, has that. I think maybe AHAC and some of the other people in Washington that have helped that along. Now when you get a major government contract, in order to get it, you have got to say I am going to put 20% or 10% to minority and women on this contract here. We have delivery of mail throughout the place sorted to minority contractors. Drivers that haul the school kids out here is owned by a women's firm. It doesn't mean black necessarily. It means any disadvantaged.

I think AHAC probably could take some pride in getting this thing started in this city. The people that were here were willing, they just needed an organization, maybe that's what AHAC meant.

DUNAR: How was that organization founded. Was the initiative because of pressure from the outside or was it the people themselves who took the initiative and got together and formed it?

SANDERSON: Probably a little bit of both. I think they were being advised by the government that they needed to do their part, so they recognized the fact that they needed to do their part. I don't know who put it together. They wanted to be a part of this community, so they put things together to help the minorities, the women.

DUNAR: Did you attend those meetings from Marshall? Was there somebody from the Army also?

SANDERSON: Yes, I believe there was.

DUNAR: Was it mainly involved in contracts from Marshall or was it the whole community?

SANDERSON: The whole community. I don't know who really got it started, whether the Army, NASA or jointly it got started, I don't really remember.

DUNAR: But mainly it was aimed toward the Army and Marshall?

SANDERSON: I guess at that time. Well, not totally, because there were a lot of businesses that didn't do business with the Army or the government, not many, but I am trying to think of an electronics company out here that was a big member, who as far as I know didn't have any government contracts. Back in those days there wasn't the diversification that there was now. Any company that was started and going then was probably government contract. But, now maybe it is a little more diversified than it was back then. There are certainly many more companies in here and most of the companies in here have probably gotten an edict from the Army or NASA saying that you have got to do certain things on your proposal that we want to recognize and come out before we give you the contract or the award. What you say you are going to do for a small business plan. Those things are looked at now, so there is not really a need for AHAC anymore. The companies pretty much know what they have to do.

DUNAR: Were there people in the city government or whatever agencies in the city that might have a role in this as well?

SANDERSON: I believe there were, but I can't identify them. There was Headstart programs around the city and other programs that helped disadvantaged minorities. I don't remember if I was a member or an alternate, I know I went all the time.

DUNAR: Another name that I ran across all the time, Harry Gorman. Could you tell us a little bit about what his role was at NASA and also what kind of person he was.

SANDERSON: Harry Gorman was the head of the Administration under von Braun. Von Braun had an assistant for technical and an assistant for administration. Gorman was the assistant for administration. He was the one that was instrumental in taking calls from Mr. Webb. He was the one putting we need to do this, give me your guidance. He was very active in this area. Not only in the EEO program as it was run by the personnel office, but also the contractual program that was run by contracts, he was over that too. So he watched. We had a great deal of interaction with him. He was a great administrator. The kind of guy that got the job done.

DUNAR: Did you get involved at all in monitoring contractors for compliance with EEO?

SANDERSON: Early on we did. We had that, it was part of the Equal Employment Opportunity Office that was set up in 1972. I had two or three guys that went out to the contractors plant and we had a form that NASA gave us that had to reflect how many minorities they got, how many in management. We were active in that. We tried to encourage them to increase their numbers. I am not sure how successful we were. They knew we were going to write them up. Then there was a lot of hassle between the two guys and NASA finally elected to take the contractor compliance program somewhere else.

DUNAR: So it was no longer even under Marshall or under a different office at Marshall?

SANDERSON: It was not under Marshall at all. That happened about 1976. I believe it was turned back to DECAS. I was glad to see it change

DUNAR: About that same time, I think, there were a series of RIFs that affected Marshall. How did that affect your writing?

SANDERSON: I think the RIFs were really a little bit before that. That had a bad affect. I really wanted to get out of personnel and I didn't want to go back anymore. The reason I did was because the guys I fished and hunted with thought I could protect them in RIFs and I couldn't. There are very clear laws and rules and regulations. You have to follow them. RIFs are devastating operation exercise. So many people are damaged by a RIF and there is nothing that anybody can do about it. If they came to work at a certain time, if they are

veteran or non-veteran, they fit into a notch. The Attention Register, as you worked with those attention registers the low people go out first. It just is very hard exercise to run. First of all a reduction in force is very difficult because of the many regulations that you have to be sure you follow. The appeals that come up as a result. RIF were devastating to personnel offices, so much that I didn't want to go back into personnel. When I came back from Oklahoma I didn't want to go back into personnel and we worked it out and they wanted me to take this other office with equal employment. But I never did get out. I didn't have to run any RIFs then, but I got involved with personnel everyday. It was fun building up the organization. It was most devastating, heart-breaking because you could not do anything about it. Everyone that got separated thought you could because I know you for 20 years, you could have kept me on the job. But there was no way. When you say what effect did it have, did it have any effect, I didn't want anymore of it.

DUNAR: We have talked with some of the Germans and there is a feeling that I have come out with, that George Lowe and Headquarters had aimed at least in part, the RIFs at them, to get them a reduce in rate or get some of them moved out.

SANDERSON: I wouldn't even want to answer that.

DUNAR: On civil rights issues, there are a couple of cases that we came across. Joe Haynes and Joseph Ben Curry in 1963. Do you remember those cases? They are discrimination cases. I remember Joe Haynes, but I can't remember Curry.

DUNAR: They were both right about the same time. One was an issue of not being given the appropriate assignment. The other was a question of promotion.

SANDERSON: I don't remember the Curry case, but I remember the Joe Haynes case. I don't remember much about it. I don't know how that finally came out.

DUNAR: These are unusual then?

SANDERSON: It depends on which side your looking at. They are not unusual for the person that's got them. They shouldn't be unusual to any person that is handling them. [We] shouldn't categorize them. It was just another case where the guy thought he was

being discriminated against, or whatever the case may be. You have to process it through, get all the facts and work just as hard, regardless of how you feel personally. I do remember some cases. I remember Haynes as a name, where he worked. You can't let those personal feelings enter into it. Somebody else could tell you about those, Jim {sounds like Hisner} or somebody that may still be here.

DUNAR: I talked to Jim Rice last week. One of the things that he talked about that I thought was quite interesting is that the most common sorts of cases that they have had recently are questions of age. What were the most common cases you had to deal with?

SANDERSON: Black.

DUNAR: Was it dealing with age, promotion?

SANDERSON: I was overlooked for promotion because I am black. You didn't hire me because I am black, things like that. I would say almost all were. I can't remember any that weren't. There may have been some women, one or two cases of discrimination charged because of women, but as a rule, black first and women second.

DUNAR: What was the procedure for handling grievances?

SANDERSON: There were a dozen different procedures.

DUNAR: Was it mostly handled internally at Marshall or did you have to go through external means?

SANDERSON: They would go through external if the person wasn't satisfied. If they felt that we didn't process it according to whatever the guidelines and regulations were, they could always ask for a review. In the government you never should discourage a person even going back to {his voice drops off and I can't tell what he is saying} So if they feel like they got good treatment by me or Jim, they could send it right up to the NASA headquarters and say these guys didn't treat me right. That's about all they have to say. They didn't treat me right because I was black, or a women. Now I guess they don't treat them right because of age. I had grievances with four people. One was right and the other wasn't. It said we didn't select them back in October because they were Vietnam veterans.

Then they put in another one from the same group that was racial. Same group put another in saying not against me, but against the union, saying the union had lied to them. There are so many channels that people can go to if they feel they are being discriminated against because they can go to the National Labor Relations Board. So they come up here and investigate. They sit and take their time to tell them and take my time to tell them. They gather the information, take time to talk to all the people involved. Its a very expensive process. I have even offered two of these guys temporarily jobs, because that is all we had. They didn't want them. So they put in another grievance. It kind of goes along with what Jim was saying. We are getting more cases now for everything other than black. It makes you wonder if you are doing a better job with blacks than you used to do. I don't know. I think everybody that is in government or industry are aware of the fact, the social considerations are a part of today. You have to address them and recognize them, do what's right.

DUNAR: You mentioned that you were involved also in the labor relations. Could you explain a little bit about that?

SANDERSON: When I was with, I guess my most labor relations experience goes way back to the Ordnance districts when we had companies that would manufacture stuff for the government and the ordnance district was responsible for buying that or shipping it out of the plants to the customer. Whomever that might be, some government agency might have somebody that needed ammunition forms. It was our responsibility to get that out for them. My responsibility then was wherever there was a strike, I had to get active in the ordnance corp. Is there anything in the plant that is needed by the contractors, badly needed, that needs to come out of there now. So I had to work very closely with the unions back in St. Louis. That's why I learned you don't ever lie to any of them. Straight forward with them, you get better luck. So if there was an instance where we had to have something out of the plant, a small bore or something out, they arranged to let us go through to do it. But that was only because we had established some kind of repertoire with them. There

were no unions in government, for instance, so the Army, The AFGE (American Federation of Government Employees) was the first ones that established the rights to bargain for certain people at the Center. They won the right to represent 3,000 people. I got active when they held that election. Then when they won, we had to negotiate contract with them. Well, this was early on now, '57 or '58. So we arranged with a guy from Georgia Tech, He was the head of the school of management at Georgia Tech at that time, to come over and teach myself and another guy, how to do labor relations, negotiations, labor contract with the unions. He came over and spent a week doing nothing more but working with me and this other guy to teach us all he knew about how we could do it. That's how I got involved with it. I followed his guidance. I still use that direction that he gave me. As a matter of fact, when I taught graduate school at UAH and I had a class called "Labor Relations and the External Environment". Part of that course was to divide the group up into half and make half of them the union and half of them labor, put their proposals together and then negotiate a contract. So I used the same procedure that the guy from Georgia Tech taught me. That's how I got involved in labor relations as it became known in government way back then. I was chief negotiator for the first contract that the agency had which made them the Marshall Space Flight Center. Then I negotiated after that three or four more. Then the engineers, I forgot what the title was, formed a labor union out there. I negotiated the first contract with them. I negotiated several contracts out there with the FGEN and the professional engineering union.

DUNAR: What sort of issues?

SANDERSON: The issues that they couldn't bring up, you would think on the surface, was pay. But you could bring up overtime, leave. The only thing they can't bring up is the schedule. The government has a schedule. I think if you are a twelve you get this much money. If you are a four you get this much money. You can't negotiate that. You can negotiate everything about that. That's one thing that the people in the private sector, say well, hell, it much not be much of a job as negotiator. The union contract that I negotiated

back then was exactly like the union contract that we have right here today on this contract. Exactly, overtime, shifts. All of that is money. So even though they say you can't negotiate, no, not salaries per say, but everything dealing with that. How do you handle overtime. Does the supervisor pass it around, go by seniority? Do you punch a time-card, yes or no? The rest of these things are, you can pick up any contract for government or industry, and it will be almost identical. The same stuff.

DUNAR: There was a brief strike, wasn't there?

SANDERSON: Yes. They couldn't strike. There may have been a strike at one of the companies doing business with NASA might have had a strike. There was some discussion that they were going...(tape ran out on side 1.)

Most of my time now is spent in labor relations. Yesterday the operating engineers wanted to hold an election to see if they could get representation of all heavy equipment operators in the country. They lost yesterday. I have two cases going into arbitration now. I have two or three grievances going into arbitration. A lot of this is not history, it is the way it is today. Sometime I feel like, for example, I just had a call a while ago. The guy says, I haven't gotten my back pay since December 11. I didn't know you were do any back pay. Yes, my supervisor ... At this company when I was working as a consultant with the telephone company up in Tennessee, before I came here with this company. I was writing policies and procedures for them and doing some other things. I wrote about 200 policies and procedures for operating practices for the telephone company. We got this contract and we are still not been told that we were going to have it for 5 years. There are no policies and procedures that have been written. I have been trying to do some of those. Unless you get some of those policies down, you continue to have some problems. That plus we did have to hire a bunch of people and get records into shape. We have had to work hard. Now we aren't recruiting as much as we were and are announcing jobs. Its more of a personnel office. Most of my time is still taken up with labor relations.

DUNAR: The union for the engineers, the professional union, is it just a local unit, or is it attached?

SANDERSON: Its part of the AFL-CIO some where down the line.

DUNAR: Are they concerned with different types of issues than the

SANDERSON: That's NASA. They had to reconstruct a new contract and most of the stuff is the same.

DUNAR: Did you get involved when you were at Marshall, with issue like you did with the civil rights in contractor compliance?

SANDERSON: The only issues that we got involved in was the goal, Mr. Contractor, is to put so many managers of minority and women. You don't have those, unless you get those something bad might happen to you. The contractor compliance program was to encourage them to do more than that if NASA wanted to take issue. Not have all of your minorities grouped as laborers, spread them out. We would make these reports and send them to Washington.

DUNAR: What did you do to get minorities to move up the grade at Marshall?

SANDERSON: We had training programs. They have a lot of programs given over the years at Marshall. One of the programs is to take secretaries when they announce a job for what is called a Step Program. They move them from secretary to a professional like accountant. They have certain requirements, have to go through schools, etc. They progress 5, 7, 9, 11 without having a job announcement. That has helped to give secretaries, typist, that area where most of them work, and put into... My wife is an analyst, cost or something. She was a secretary and got on one of those programs through announcements and she has moved year by year and is now up to 11 and I think going to 12 in December. So, different programs were put in by NASA and by Marshall, but primarily by NASA and the government to raise the people up through the ranks a little bit. People who up until I left government in 1979, I guess we started some of those programs, but, minorities and women were mostly secretarial and clerk, but that is not really the case. At

least they have the opportunity. I can think of a secretary who was a secretary to the Administrative Science Directorate, who got on one of these programs and she is now way up there in just a few years. That's some of the programs. I don't know how effective all of them are. The professionally the hiring of engineers applied 7, 9, 11. They may be hiring in at 7, I don't know. They can progress too. There are programs in the government and the space program at NASA if they take advantage of them that you can move people up and spread minorities and women. You go into any board meeting, I don't care what kind of company, you are not going to see many women on the Board of Directors. I have never been to one yet that if you go into top level meetings at Marshall and NASA where there will be some women. Women and minorities might not have gotten to that top room yet.

DUNAR: There was a question about taking civil service jobs away and giving them to contractors leading to class action suits.

SANDERSON: It probably would. I think it was here with the Army with NASA that we have never had before. There was a study, I think they called it, 76A, it was a study that the government goes through to see if it is more economical to keep it in-house or to put it out-of-house. They call that some kind of A76 Study or something. If they determine that it could be done more economically outside the government then they do that and that means that all these people in the government will loose their job. So that brings on a lot of friction. Those kinds of studies are being encouraged from the highest level. While NASA has been involved in contracting out for many years, a long as I can remember. Back in the Medaris days, they used contractors in a very good way. They would use them to take up the peaks and valleys of work load. That way they could keep their civil service staff stable. They wouldn't be going up and cutting back. Let the contractors do that. So early on I think that was the philosophy and I don't think that is too bad of a philosophy in my judgement. I think if I were in government I would say lets go that way. Lets let the contractors do the reduction in force not us. But when you have these studies and if the

decision is made to contract it out then that means the people in the government lose their jobs.

DUNAR: It was also in part from the beginning, maybe even back to the ABMA days, that there was a difference in philosophies. Maybe even in NASA administration as compared to Marshall [who had] the tradition of doing things in-house here and it seems like people at Langley [contracted out].

SANDERSON: I think there was. There was some pains that not necessary Marshall, but other field centers, felt that they could do almost anything they wanted to do in-house because they had the talent to do it. I think there was heavy consideration that you ought to put all the machine shops out on contract and used the people you got in civil service. Now they weren't saying this to get rid of them. They were saying use those positions for engineers or for something like studies or research. They weren't necessarily saying sell your machine shops out and do all away with your civil workers. I think NASA and Marshall had a more healthy, I can't remember any major RIFs as a result of contracting out. I think there is a different philosophy between the Army at Redstone and NASA as far as contractors.

DUNAR: There was a difference between the Air Force and the Army system with NASA agreeing, maybe, more with the Air Force system. Would you notice any tension on that issue coming through the personnel office?

SANDERSON: No. I may have at the time, but it has been so long ago that I can't remember enough to comment on it.

DUNAR: Did you have contact often with von Braun? What sort of impression did you have of him?

SANDERSON: Yes. Von Braun was scientist, top flight guy. I can't say enough good about him. What was true with him was also true with the other scientists. They didn't really want to spend much time with administrative matters. So each of the scientist had in

their organization an administrative guy that we mostly dealt with because they were so busy doing the technical.

DUNAR: That was Harry Gorman?

SANDERSON: No Harry was in these different laboratories. I don't think von Braun or any of them liked to deal with administration, but that was part of it. So these administrative guys they hired did that. Of course they worked with the direction of the lab director they were working for. They still did all the leg work so the scientist could do scientific work. I can remember one time we were having some major problems, or von Braun was, with one of the scientist, (I can't think which one it was) so he wanted to call me in to talk to him. He wanted me to come up and I did. Von Braun handled it very professionally. He was just a professional guy, just a real personable. I am not sure we satisfied the scientist with the problem, but when he left von Braun said, "Art, I sure am glad that I am not a scientist!" He could command an audience. They would just fall in love with him. Congress liked him. When he was here, he was able to get a lot of things done for NASA and for the Army Missile Command. The charisma that man had was just unreal as far as I am concerned. He was just a fantastic person. I worked with him and his deputies a lot back in the ABMA days and even in NASA.

DUNAR: Was that with Eberhard Rees?

SANDERSON: Yes. In fact I see him every now and then. Rees is the one that wanted to take a job with heading these contractor compliance laws with the EEO office.

DUNAR: What was he like to work with?

SANDERSON: Very good. He was a technical man. Very good, very detailed. Back then none of them had enough of anything. Not enough money, not enough Rees was a very real high level, he wasn't like the same type person von Braun was, but von Braun was a public relations guy. He was a top-flight scientist too, but he also of acted as a public relations image. His public relations image was great. He was on Life magazine one time and our recruiting effort were helped out so much. Now we could never have bought the

kind of publicity he brought us. Rees was strictly a technical man. He handled administration after he became center director. But he would much rather have dealt with the technical.

DUNAR: It seems like they worked well as a team. Von Braun sort of charming everybody and then Rees coming in and assisting things to get done.

SANDERSON: That is exactly right. It was great.

DUNAR: We talked a little before about Webb's insistence to change. Did that end up resting on your shoulders in terms of what personnel had to do to respond to this pressure from Washington?

SANDERSON: No that pressure would come to the center director. Then we would discuss what we could do to satisfy it.

DUNAR: There were things that we have run across that were done in respond to these things, like an intern program, grants and aide to A&M and Oakwood, and a co-op program. Do you remember those and how well they worked? Were they successful?

SANDERSON: I think the co-op program is a fantastic program. I hope my kid gets into it when he gets out this year. The co-op program is a great program, always has been and will be. Everybody recognizes, the people at the university run it well. It turns out a first grade engineer or accountant or whatever you are co-oping.

DUNAR: Was this initiated for civil rights purposes?

SANDERSON: It was initiated to get good engineers, regardless. We didn't have any black or women. It has gotten both. We went to the schools and they put blacks and women into these program. The co-op program in my judgement was not put in because of civil rights, but civil rights benefitted. The intern programs and grants and aides, I am not sure how grants and aides work anymore. I am not a scholar of those or intern. I think too much emphasis was put on intern programs. That test doesn't tell you whether he stands out, well a series of test does, but too many programs take a difficult test, that was almost impossible for a person to pass and qualify for the thing. Those kinds of test I have little

use for. It can give you an indication of what you might expect. I am sure those intern programs worked good at Marshall but I was not very close to them. I was also interested in other things. We even had a graduate program, where after they graduated with a degree they could go on. They may not have it anymore. Programs like that and then programs like the Step Programs and other programs of upward mobility internal to the Center I think helped minorities, women and the organization. I think that's a good program. I hope they are getting more sophisticated all the time.

DUNAR: In the sixties with this apparent division between the northern part of the state and the rest of the state on issues like civil rights, was there pressure at all from the Wallace administration?

SANDERSON: No, that division is in my own mind.

DUNAR: Well, we have heard that from other people that there was a division.

SANDERSON: Well, it was my feeling that this was a different part of Alabama. Early on in the '60s Wallace stood at the schoolhouse door at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa somewhere, and I don't think that helped anybody. The bad thing about that, the Selma march and all that went on here, is that's Alabama. My feeling was that is not Huntsville. When you go out and try to get somebody to come in here, I don't want to go to Alabama. We would tell them to come and take a look at us. It created a recruiting problem. The image that was created by some of those things that happened were not very well thought out. The day that he stood in the school door down there, someone was suppose to stand in a school up here because a guy named McCrabtree [sounds like] was suppose to go into the school that night. But nobody showed up to stand in the doorway. That's one thing nobody paid any attention to it in this part of the county. In fact if anybody had gone and stood in at the school, I am not sure somebody wouldn't have gone a jerked him out. I feel that somebody would have. I wouldn't have, but somebody would have. We have never had that kind of system here. The closest we have had is when the Klan started moving around in Athens or someplace. They have their constituents to

satisfy, I guess they have to. Just because I get concerned about it, doesn't mean they can't exercise their right as a citizen. That's the closest thing I believe to any kind of a racial disturbance.

DUNAR: You mentioned a few other people like Jim Rice, Clyde Foster, can you think of any other people that we should talk to in connection with civil rights issues, EEO and that sort of thing?

SANDERSON: There are some people in the personnel office that were there back then. Miller Potsberger [sounds like] was one. I can't think of the guy that used to do the contractor compliance work. Ed Riddick worked with training, but he was in the contractor compliance. Charlie Hester was there then. Judy Arnold who is still there and was there back pretty far, maybe early '60s. She was my secretary at one time.

DUNAR: For the blacks, when a few of them did start to come. When some of the black engineers, the technical people did start to come, what was it like for them?

SANDERSON: I don't know how they felt it was for them. We kind of looked at it as we were glad to get some people in these areas. I believe it worked out all right.

DUNAR: Did you have to do anything in terms of making sure they could find housing in Huntsville or anything of that sort?

SANDERSON: Jim Wright handled some of that. I think if I remember right, that I let Jim do most of that. We may have done some housing surveys, but I don't think we found anything that said, "Blacks can live in this area," I think they stayed out of southeast Huntsville, but there may be some down there now, I don't know. Most of them found the kind of housing they could afford in northwest and northeast Huntsville. That's where they kind of went. I see a lot of blacks in Madison. They can afford things now that they couldn't afford then. Many of them are professionals and have good jobs, make good money. Jim's lifestyle has always been good. Clyde Foster in my judgement was good. Clyde has made it all for himself, so has Jim and so has a lot of them. Whatever they have

they have earned, maybe somebody helped them a little bit, but they have done it by themselves. There ability is unquestionable, at least with those two guys.