

NASA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

EDITED ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT 2

CAROL A. HOMAN
INTERVIEWED BY JENNIFER ROSS-NAZZAL
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ROSS-NAZZAL: Today is June 29th, 2023. This interview with Carol Homan is being conducted for the NASA Oral History Project. The interviewer is Jennifer Ross-Nazzal. Thanks again for taking some time to meet with me today. Really appreciate it.

HOMAN: Glad to.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Last time we talked about *Challenger* [STS-51L] but we didn't talk about you earning a master's degree. I was curious about that. Why did you decide to go back and work on that degree?

HOMAN: It took me so long to get my undergraduate degree. I got it 10 years after I got out of high school. While I was co-oping, I was taking 18-hour semesters. When I got to my last semester, I only needed about 15 hours to graduate. So I went ahead and added a graduate class on to go back to an 18-hour semester in 1981. I had started the work then. It wasn't too far into that, maybe a year or two, I started taking some night classes, continued to go to night school with one class a semester or so to work on a master's degree.

The thing about Procurement is it was a whole lot of people who had essentially the same skill set. I was ambitious enough that I wanted to have anything that I could say about myself or that I had on my resume that made me competitive for that. It was kind of funny because I'm not

that competitive a person. But I was ambitious. That was why I decided to do that. There were some other people who had masters' degrees, but it wasn't all that common in Procurement for people to have that.

I started out that way. I was used to going to night school anyway. I didn't mind continuing like that. Then JSC and U of H [University of Houston]-Clear Lake started a program. I don't know whose idea it was—whether it was JSC's or U of H-Clear Lake's. But they established a master's in public management and worked that jointly with JSC. You could do the classwork during work time with another group of JSC people. Some of my friends were in the class.

There were at least maybe 15, 18 of us I would say that were doing that work. That made it kind of fun. That program didn't give you a complete degree, but I continued to take night classes and finished with a project after the semester was over so that I could get a master's degree out of it. You could do just the coursework as an employee, but I wanted the master's degree.

I was glad to have that. It's a different kind of a degree. It's not one that you would get just anywhere. I appreciated the fact that it was helpful and conducive for somebody who was working in the public sector as opposed to an MBA [master's in business administration]. I'd gotten my undergraduate in business, so I didn't want to go get an MBA and take the same classes. This gave me a little bit different perspective that was useful for the job and made some connections with other people at JSC. I enjoyed doing that and was glad to get it.

I got to the end of that in 1984. That was when I was working on the biggest negotiation I ever did. I was six months pregnant—not at the time it started—but I had the project remaining to do, so I had done a project at JSC in Procurement looking at the scheduling system that they

used, the database that they used for scheduling Procurement work. I had completed my project and had my first draft into the professor at U of H that had headed this program up.

He told me, "I am leaving U of H-Clear Lake to go to Colorado. But don't worry. It's all set up." It was an ex-JSC business manager director, can't remember his name now, that was going to take over. He would see to it that I got my work finished. This was all I had left to do. Once the semester started, I was scheduled to go and see him, and he died.

Then I got turned over to someone else that I didn't know and hadn't taken any classes with. He took my project work. It wasn't the same as a thesis. It was supposed to just be a report on the work I had done. This person knew nothing about that. Right before Thanksgiving I got it back with a markup from him [that] said, "This is not master's level work. You do not have my approval" with no other comments. Nothing.

By that time I was more pregnant and didn't know if I was going to graduate or not, and I was in the middle of that negotiation. It just so happened that Dr. Hyde, the professor I'd worked with in the beginning, was in the area at Christmastime. I got ahold of him and cried and said, "I don't know what's going to happen here." He said, "Don't worry about it, I'll take care of it." I did not know until I got my grades in the mail whether I had completed the work or not. At that point I didn't care anymore. I just thought I'll either have a master's degree, or I won't. I'm done.

I did get it. I didn't walk with my class, but I did finish the work. It really was well worth it. I think it helped again make me competitive or helped me be considered for management after that.

ROSS-NAZZAL: What sorts of subjects or topics were you looking at?

HOMAN: We did a lot of case studies of things that had worked and not worked in public projects and where there were Agency decisions made and how things worked or didn't work after that. We took more advanced government courses, and we took more government law. That's about all I remember of that. It was 36 hours, like most other masters' in Texas are.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That sounds interesting.

HOMAN: It was. I don't know if you can even get that same degree anymore.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was wondering the same thing. Just to take the class on Agency decision making, that would be a really good class for so many people at JSC and across the Agency.

HOMAN: Exactly. Had a lot of leadership classes. It was a different angle than an MBA but with some of the same kinds of things, some of them related to financial decisions and legal decisions and management decisions. All of that was in there. Yes, I thought it was really interesting. I've never regretted getting that instead of an MBA. Although after I retired, I taught classes at San Jac [San Jacinto College, Pasadena and Houston, Texas]. I was going to be in their business management curriculum and when they looked at that and said, "Oh, well, normally we're looking at an MBA for these adjunct classes," so I explained what it did do, and they said okay.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think you'd mentioned last time off the recording that you went to Smith [College, Northampton, Massachusetts], that you ended up actually receiving some sort of MBA training through the Agency as well.

HOMAN: Yes. That was like a mini-MBA. That was the other thing that convinced San Jac that it would be okay for me to teach. Yes. I was really thrilled to be nominated and have the opportunity to go to Smith. I was a little disappointed because some of my friends were going to a similar program with Harvard [University, Cambridge, Massachusetts]. There was one with Harvard, one with some other Ivy League school, I don't remember what the other one was. These were ones that JSC used. Then there was the one at Smith. The one at Smith, it was all women who were in the classes. But we had instructors that were from business programs all from Ivy League schools. I met other women from other NASA centers and women from corporate organizations and had the opportunity to see Massachusetts. So I paid Dave back for all those times he had traveled, and I was left at home with the kids. He got two summers with our teenage daughter and our disabled son and made up for lost time, just those two summers. All of that was worth it.

That is something I think JSC really should get credit for. I don't know if that's a NASA-wide thing. I suspect it is. Or whether it's a government employment thing. But the value that was placed on training people to do their jobs well. Every time I go into a business and see employees who don't seem to know what they're doing that's my first thought. They should be training these people. I really appreciate the fact that JSC was good at that. They made sure you were trained. This kind of program was really set up to prepare people for next-

level management. I appreciate the fact that I had the opportunity to do it, knowing that they thought highly enough of me that that possibility still existed for me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: What sort of courses were you taking during that program at Smith as compared to what you had at UHCL?

HOMAN: At Smith it was pretty much what you would get in an MBA. A lot of it was very similar to what I had had in undergraduate business: accounting classes and business law and marketing and all those kinds of things they would do. We would be in class 40 hours a week for three weeks. We didn't have to do a great deal of homework and we didn't have to take tests or get grades, so that part was very useful. I think the way they did it that it was about six courses total, and we'd spend a week in each topic. They even trained us in things like doing presentations and running meetings. It was a really good program, and a good experience for women to have.

I'm sure that part of what that program did was help women in a lot of places get training and mentorship that they may not have gotten in their workplace to prepare them for newer levels of management because in the early '90s there still weren't that many women in higher-level positions. It was worth it for that.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Were there any leadership courses that were offered?

HOMAN: Yes. I'm trying to think of how we did that. One of my biggest memories from that program—we did one. It was probably in something like organizational behavior, may have

been in leadership. We did personality test kinds of things. I had done the same kind of a thing, I don't remember which method it was, but [I was] an ISTJ, an introvert, and [it] had something to do with judgment and your way of thinking through things. I'd taken that class with a bunch of engineers, and I fit right in with them. I was like 80 percent with the same rating that they had.

Then I took the same kind of personality test with 36 women, and I was the only one that came up with that score. I said something to the professor that was teaching that class. She looked at me, and she was asking what the scores were. She said, "Women aren't that." I said, "Oh, well, okay." At least I knew I fit in where I came from. I wasn't deterred by that. I thought that was probably good news that working at JSC was the right place for me to be.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's funny. While you were working on your original master's degree were you thinking that you would leave Procurement then? Was that your intent?

HOMAN: No. Not really. I really expected to be in Procurement one way or the other. I don't think I would have had any problems with getting promoted there beyond the level that I was. But like I wrote in my story, it wasn't that appealing to me. More money was appealing to me. The idea of reviewing other people's work and signing your name as opposed to doing the research and doing the negotiations and being a part of all that, that just didn't sound like fun to me. It might have been a lot better than I thought it was, looking at it from a distance.

I was to the point I'd probably been a 12 for a couple of years, GS [General Schedule]-12, when my friend [in Procurement, Ginger Darnell], started working in Center Ops. I was so

interested in hearing about what she was doing, so when she contacted me to see if I was interested in applying for the job that she had held, I [was ready for a change].

In Procurement one thing that people did competitively was they always wanted to go to work for programs. That was something else that wasn't that appealing to me, because in programs you did a small piece of something really big. But with institutional stuff you could play a bigger role in something that could also be pretty big, not the kinds of billions associated with a long-term program. But that's the other thing. I knew that the Shuttle Program and the Station Program, those were all really long-term things that were going to go on forever, and again you play a tiny little role. I was never all that enthused. I never tried to make a move over there. That was a common thing to do. People wanted to get out of institutional stuff and into programs, and that wasn't high on my list of things to do. Again getting promoted was.

When I had the opportunity to go to Center Ops what I liked about that was the work was different all the time. I did like the way it expanded what I already knew. In the job that I took as the contracting officer's technical representative my experience in Procurement was helpful for that: to understand, to challenge anything that came out of procurement. I didn't do [that] often, but I at least understood and knew how things were supposed to happen and expanded what I knew.

Even used a good bit of what I had learned as a secretary going back that far. In the second management job I had there over at Data Management where I had editors working for me and was reviewing things that they had written. All that sort of fit with what I knew from the GPO [Government Publishing Office] style manual way back when I had been a secretary. So I did enjoy the variety of the work that was there and the group of people I worked with.

That, when I went into it, was kind of an aging population; there were a lot of people who had been there for a long time and were starting to retire. I had an opportunity to bring in or work with people that were newer and younger. Hiring people was an opportunity I had as a supervisor there. Really a management job with 235 contractors that were mostly working with other civil servants, that was a pretty big group to have that kind of responsibility for.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Yes, very diverse group too that I was reading: mail room, graphics, publications, the *Roundup*, the printing plant, library, document storage, and even public affairs.

DAVID HOMAN: The Photo Lab.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh, and the Photo Lab too?

HOMAN: Yes. Toward the end I was responsible for the Photo Lab too. They combined some things that had been separate before [through] a reorg.

DAVID HOMAN: I knew all the photographers, and they were old crotchety guys. When they found out she was [in charge], they told me that they liked working with her.

ROSS-NAZZAL: She didn't have as many strong opinions about things?

HOMAN: Yes.

DAVID HOMAN: She got them, she understood them.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How did you get acquainted with all of these areas and have a better understanding of their functions and what they could and couldn't do and what needed to get done?

HOMAN: That was really tricky. The first time it really showed up the original one, the mail room and some of that stuff, those kinds of things were fairly straightforward, and people doing those jobs knew what they were doing. That part was easy, and I wasn't in that position for very long.

When I moved into the Data Management Branch, the second branch chief job that I had, that one was very challenging because it was a bigger group of civil servants. There were 16 or so people that were located all over the Center. The library was new to me, and the documents, all of it was new. When I would get there in the morning, by the time I arrived or as soon as I looked up there would be a line of people outside on different subjects that needed something. It was kind of overwhelming at first.

A class that I had taken in my undergraduate was in organization structure. For some reason that had always fascinated me. I had memorized and stared at JSC's org charts for years. It was always interesting to me to see where people moved to and how different organizations were put together.

I proposed to the branch chief that he allow me to establish two people as leads, one over the library and the data management tasks and another one over the graphics and publications tasks. Both of those were fairly new people when they got those positions. They were beating

out somebody who had been there a long time, but I didn't think were as good candidates for [leadership].

They were informal positions. Neither of those people got promoted at that time, but it prepared them. Both of them went into management jobs at a later date. It really helped me because they were ones who were experts in those two areas or had some expertise, and they could manage the small stuff, the day-to-day stuff, and just bring it to me so I dealt mostly with them and not with 16 people standing outside my office.

I feel good about having done that. It was just one of those—it was from studies about span of control in management and what made sense. That was very different from Procurement because in Procurement—well, their structure was a little bit that way too because we had contracting officers, so you could be a buyer and there was a branch chief and then there were two or three contracting officers that would sign off on the work you did, and a few people that would answer to them. Even that, when you're looking at the same skill set and the same kind of work, is different than 16 people who are all doing very different things.

That was a good experience for me, and I was always proud that I made that happen and it worked so well and offered opportunities for a couple of other people that I thought really deserved [it; one of them was Larry N. Sweet, who eventually served as NASA chief information officer].

ROSS-NAZZAL: How did you stay in contact with people? Did you have email at that point? Or were you primarily using walking around management ?

HOMAN: Yes, in the beginning it was certainly that. In the late '80s there wouldn't have been email. It meant physically going and that's another reason why having the leads helped. They could go out and do it. There were some positions, and again that didn't make me very popular, there were some positions where people had been in the job for a long time in a remote place. When I would go out and visit them and ask about what they were doing and what was going to be accomplished and asking the people that they were supposed to be supporting how that was going, there were a lot of things I discovered when I ended up sort of redefining their jobs or relocating them. We had [some] turnover with that, and that was okay. It worked out just fine. There were a few people who decided to retire. They were eligible, so there wasn't any reason not to do it. But yes, there were a couple of different people who had gotten used to filling their days with whatever they wanted to do because nobody was watching, and nobody was overseeing what they did. Once that happened then there were a few people who left. But I didn't think that was a disadvantage.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You had mentioned something that I thought was interesting, that you were managing women as well. Can you talk about that and the change you experienced?

HOMAN: In the mail room among the contractors there were some men, but the civil servants that I was responsible for in that very first supervisory job I had, the group that I was first responsible for was all women. There was something a little bit unnerving about it to me. I liked them; I enjoyed working with them. It had such a different feel than all the years that I had spent working with mostly men. It was a nice step between MPAD [Mission Planning and Analysis Division] where it was almost all male to Procurement where it was a good fifty-fifty or

so mix by the time I was there. It was still all men in management, but the workforce was mostly about fifty-fifty. Then going to work where it was all women—one of the things I've told people is that it seems like when you're working with all men, nothing had to do with feelings, even though some things really do. You didn't address them or talk about them. You fought over things or argued about things, but you never addressed or thought about or talked about feelings.

When you work with a group that's all women you're dealing with feelings, and it makes it a little bit harder to get the work done. I really liked working with a balanced group of people because I think those things sort themselves out a little bit better when that's more true.

The graphics and publications group ended up being a little closer to a fifty-fifty number by the time I left. Just fell out that way. Wasn't anything I was trying to make happen but that's about what it was with new hires and as we were replacing people. Actually to start with it probably was about fifty-fifty in that particular branch. The Administrative Services Branch that was all women. I started out as kind of the section chief, and all the women were located there together. I really did gain an appreciation for a diverse workforce. It helped.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I am curious, you don't have to name names of course, but I am curious if you can give an example where feelings got in the way that you noticed, whereas when you were working with MPAD or another group where it just wasn't an issue. Guys were like, "This is the work that we have to do. We don't have time to deal with these types of issues."

HOMAN: The main thing as far as working with men where feelings aren't addressed was the one that I talked about where the man's wife was calling. I was getting the harassing phone calls every day. The fact that that was upsetting to me [was because] no one was concerned about that

because I was supposed to answer phones and it was better for him to be closer to where the boss was. There was really nowhere to go to even talk about that. I had to keep pressing and really get sick before there was anything that would be done about it.

With women, all I remember about that is just that there were more emotional issues talked about. After this long I can't remember what specific ones were. How people were feeling about their families. One of the things that surprised me, and maybe men would have been the same way. But there was one point where we were changing some things and I was asked to look at an office setup, how we were going to seat people. That was pretty soon after I became the branch chief there. I did the drawings and said, "So-and-so sits here. So-and-so sits there," and gave that back to my boss.

There was an eruption over, "I don't want to sit with so-and-so. Why should I be moved here?" That took me by surprise. To me, we had to move. We had to sit in some places, so what I had done was what seemed logical to me about the kind of work that they were doing or what the locations were. I just remember there being a whole lot of upset about where they were going to be sitting and who they were going to be sitting with. That didn't seem to me like an engineering kind of a problem or something that you would have faced [in that type of organization]. Maybe there would have been the same kind of [reaction] if it would have been a group of men. But I think they would have probably dealt with it differently than the group of women did where they were upset and in my office in tears.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It sounds like you really upset the balance there. You ended up working in the History Office in the late 1980s. This is something that's always interested me. I find little

tidbits about the office but not a lot. I'm wondering. What was the History Office like at that point when you took over? What are your memories?

HOMAN: It was really only a small piece of my job. I was the deputy chief of the Management Services Division. I went back to my records because I wasn't sure exactly. I thought maybe it was in the Documentation Management Branch, but it doesn't look like it. It looks like I was assigned when I became deputy division chief.

As the second person in charge most of what I did wasn't all that well defined. I did whatever the division chief asked me to do, but this piece was tacked on as the history coordinator. *Suddenly, Tomorrow Came...* was already mostly written I believe, maybe completely written, and was under review by a team. I found some paperwork that said who was on it. Dan [Daniel A.] Nebrig was one, and I don't remember who the others were. They had been working with someone else. I don't even know who preceded me. It was somebody that had retired, somebody from that division, but not somebody that I knew.

I only met with the review team a few times. I think it probably was my job to pull those meetings together or to reserve space for them or see that they happened. Because I remember that [Henry C.] Dethloff would contact me about getting the review team together. I got to sign off on the approved cover for it and set the dates for getting it printed and things like that. That was it. That was my total role.

I got to know Roger [D.] Launius, working with him at [NASA] Headquarters [Washington, DC]. I honestly can't remember if I had any other functions associated with that, other than starting the oral histories. I really wish I remembered more about how that came

about or why I wanted to start it. It may have been something that Roger was doing somewhere else. I'm not sure.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was curious about that. Because we've always heard—Duane [L.] Ross said Mr. [George W.S.] Abbey wanted him to start an oral history project. I was curious what your recollections were.

HOMAN: Yes. I wish I could remember it better. It could have been Duane that suggested it to me, because I know him. But yes, I don't recall at all how or why we got it started. Just remember that it got started while I was there in that position.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Was there a History Office at all? Like a physical [space]?

HOMAN: No.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you have any contact with people at Rice [University, Houston]? Because our History Collection was transferred up there.

HOMAN: No, not that I recall. I don't think so. Now the library might have had some connection with them. I would have been responsible for the library, and somebody might have told me. But not sure about that.

ROSS-NAZZAL: The book *Suddenly, Tomorrow Came...*—was there any contention over any ideas or any chapters that he had written?

HOMAN: I don't know. Because most of that would have happened before my time. I really came in for the review part right at the end. If there had been anything big, I'm not aware of it. There probably was. I don't even know if Dethloff is still living. He was a lot older than me then. I'm not sure. But the thing that still mystifies me, if you saw I put it in that letter [that I] was sending them out. We had a long distribution list. I don't remember how we came up with that [list] for all the copies that we were going to give.

I drafted this nice letter, sent it to George Abbey's office, and they sent it back and said he wasn't going to sign it. I didn't know why he wouldn't sign it, whether he didn't like the letter or didn't like the book. I really didn't know why he wasn't going to sign it. But they said to send it out under my signature, so I did. I appreciate that [now]. Whatever his reason was, the benefit to me was I got all those nice thank-you letters from Neil [A.] Armstrong and Gene [Eugene A.] Cernan and Frank [F.] Borman and I'm delighted to have those. Even though that's the way I got them.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Those are really nice.

HOMAN: He may have done it to be really nice, or he may not have liked the letter or the book. But I got the thank you notes.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's a nice feather in your cap. I will say I use that book quite often. While you were in this position, we had our first female center director for a short time. I wondered what did that mean to you? I imagine it might have meant something or maybe it didn't, I don't know.

HOMAN: I had mixed feelings about it because I had worked with [Carolyn L.] Huntoon some as a buyer on some grants that she had for Moon rocks. Those are kind of contentious because that was one of my first jobs as a procurement professional. I still didn't understand how some of those schools got the rocks and why they weren't doing something with the rocks. Huntoon had let me know that was none of my business. I wasn't sure what I thought about it being her.

The other thing about it being her was again I was always so interested in organizational structure and how things would happen, and she came from Space and Life Sciences, and center directors didn't come from Space and Life Sciences, they came from programs, from flight control. They didn't come from Space and Life Sciences. I couldn't quite picture how that was going to work or how seriously she was going to be taken. I was really glad for there to be a woman in that position. Still, I don't know, I had some doubts about her.

But the project that I had mentioned for expanding the Child Care Center was done while she was there under her leadership, and I certainly appreciated that that happened. I always heard a little bit about her from time to time even after she left the position, because we had the same housekeeper for a long time.

It was a thrill for her to have it and it surprised me and didn't surprise me that she had the job for such a short time. I think that she was really working hard at making things better for women at JSC. But then there were several promotions that happened for women there, bringing

in women from outside JSC into senior management, which JSC just didn't do. That didn't go particularly well for some of the women who had those positions. To me that was an eye-opener because I really believe it's important to give women opportunities, but they need to be well prepared for where they go so that they'll be successful at it. That helps them, and it helps other women at the same time.

ROSS-NAZZAL: She brought in some women?

HOMAN: She did. Two women from outside JSC in senior positions. There'd been a minor reorganization and the Management Services Division had moved from Center Ops into the Information Services Directorate [ISD]. She brought a woman in from the outside to head that office, and then she brought in a woman from outside to head up Budget and Procurement. [It wasn't common to bring people into senior-level management from outside JSC and didn't work very well for either of them or their organizations—not a good “fit” with JSC culture.] ...

[It was during that time that] I got a phone call one day that I was going to be moved back to Procurement. I didn't want to do that. I thought all that time that I was being groomed to take over Bill [William A.] Larsen's job as the chief of Management Services Division or those functions. I really wasn't sure I wanted to go back to Procurement. This was in '96 that that happened.

That was when the early retirement was available, so I started planning to leave then. I wasn't even asked; I just got the phone call and was told, “You're moving over there right away.”

[From what I was told, it had something to do with the director's personal commitment for reducing staff in ISD. Two of us] had procurement experience, so [we were] to move. ... I'd never had anything like that happen to me before, and I wasn't thrilled about it.

Once I made the change and went back, Procurement had changed a little bit. What they were doing at the time was kind of a neat arrangement, I think. I headed up an office that wasn't just Procurement, it was Procurement and Budget in direct support to the Information Services Directorate. So that provided more variety, was a little different than anything I had done before. I actually enjoyed doing the work more than I thought I would after I made the move. I was still mad that I got moved, but I enjoyed the work better than I thought I would.

It turned out when that year was up and it was time, I had my 25 years in, so I could retire. It was so nice. Dick [Richard A.] Thorson was the head of the Information Services Directorate at the time. Jim Shannon was the head of the Budget and Procurement Office at the time. When they got word that I was planning my retirement I got called in by each one of them and asked, "What would you like to do to stay?" It was very rewarding to have the opportunity to do that and have either one of them consider me [in their decision for where I would be assigned].

But our son was having about a dozen seizures a day, and we had a four-year-old at home. It was just a good opportunity to go. I went ahead and went then with that option to go back. Got to go back in a way that was flexible and fun.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I did notice that you had written down that you were an EEO [equal employment opportunity] counselor. What was that?

HOMAN: I didn't remember that at all until I was going through all my files and saw that I was nominated for that, I was selected for that, I was awarded for that. I don't recall anything.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You don't remember any of it?

HOMAN: Yes. It's probably not the right term, but a politically correct thing to do than it was actually used. I got trained to do it, and I'm sure I was thrilled at the time to be nominated and asked to do it, and I feel like if I had ever had anything brought to me that I would recall it. So I don't think I ever did. When I was looking at that again the other day, I wonder if maybe there wasn't that much need for it by then because things had changed that much to where it wasn't that big a deal. I might be wrong, but certainly looking at my own life and the way things had gone for me there wasn't much I could complain about there. I think that might have been a lot of it, that the atmosphere was such that even though the office was a good idea, there wasn't that much to go on there. I don't know.

There may have been a lot of people that would have been intimidated but I don't really think so. Then there could have been other situations where I might not have been the best person to go to if there were some things with people of color, if they faced different things than what the average woman might have faced. I don't know. But yes, it was a surprise to me that I had ever been that. Didn't remember that.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It's funny because I did search for photos and that was the only photo I found of you, listed as an EEO counselor.

DAVID HOMAN: With a perm?

ROSS-NAZZAL: No. I don't remember hair being permed.

HOMAN: That was probably the one where my hair was graying. I was starting to have [grey hair].

ROSS-NAZZAL: I'm trying to remember. I think your hair looked kind of reddish.

HOMAN: Oh, okay. I was a redhead for a long time.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think that's what I remember because I always look in different places for information. I did want to ask you about teaching at San Jac because you mentioned that. How did that come about? Why did you decide to go work at San Jac for a while?

HOMAN: That came about because Bill Larsen, the division chief that I was working for, was teaching at San Jac. I thought that sounded intriguing, and I think I subbed for him a time or two. Then one of my coworkers, Duane Emmons, had been recommended by Larsen was [also] teaching at San Jac. Talking to both of them about the work and how they liked it, I thought, "Oh, I would like that."

After I retired, I applied with them, and I really did enjoy that. All the training that JSC had given me really paid off. I loved teaching the night school students. I was teaching organizational behavior and supervision and management in their technical program.

The people that were in my classes were mostly working people. I liked teaching them because the kinds of things I was teaching were things that they could relate to. They knew why they were there. They were there for a purpose. They were so good about coming to class and being prepared. In fact San Jac had an opening in 2000 and asked me to apply for that to teach full-time. I was only adjunct at first teaching one class a semester. They asked me if I would apply for the job, but by that time I was already committed to going to seminary and said that I wasn't going to take on that at the time. But I loved the experience.

I subbed a couple times during the day, and the day students were very different than the nighttime students. They weren't working yet. They weren't as engaged in the kinds of things we were talking about. I didn't like going out at night, because we had to teach from 7:00 to 10:00, and at San Jac they took that 3 hours very seriously. You had to be there until ten o'clock, and I wasn't too crazy about that. But I really did enjoy the teaching. Again, I just appreciate all that JSC helped me do to get there so that I was qualified to do it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It's like you came full circle. You decided to go to theology school, when that was your original goal.

HOMAN: I know. That amazes me too when I think about that, after all those years.

One neat thing about JSC too was before you retired, they suggested you go to retirement class, in preparation for retirement. One of the things they said there that sticks with me still after all these years was that you shouldn't go until you knew what you were going to do when you leave.

There were two things that I had decided I was going to do when I left, and one of them was Bible study classes that our church had during the week that I hadn't been able to do. It was a women's group that met once a week. Hadn't been able to do that when I was working. The other, I had talked to another JSC employee, a single woman, that had done some work with the women's shelter with people that had experienced domestic violence or sexual assault, Bay Area Turning Point, where it is now. That was something else that I wanted to get involved in, was volunteering with them.

I started doing that right away. I worked as a victim's advocate and answered the phones for them, answered emergency calls. I did that for a couple of years. What actually had me going to seminary first was I wanted to be a better volunteer. That field was interesting to me, and I wanted to do it better. That was why I started in the pastoral counseling track at seminary. When I first started doing that people would say, "What do you think you're going to do with this?" I said, "I don't know but I'll be a better volunteer."

Then I ended up going to work at a church after that working with women. It all sort of fit together.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's great. Looking over your career at JSC is there anything that you can point to where you can say, "That was my greatest contribution"?

HOMAN: The Child Care Center definitely. When I go by and see that building, it really means something to me to know that that's there. Of my three kids only my youngest actually went there, but I still remember experiences with her there. From the very beginning to the very end I probably remember more details about that, from doing the presentation. In my mind I can still

see that roomful of men, talking to them about opening a day care center, having them all sitting there sort of rolling their eyes. They already knew what they were supposed to say when they got there.

I was in tears by the time it was all over, which is not like me, and I was so embarrassed about [it], but I had worked so hard to put all the information together, and it was so important to me to do it. Then to have their reasons be so silly. There were a lot of reasons they could have given me that I would have known could be true, like there's not enough money for this. But I knew the reasons they gave me were not good reasons. I was hurt by that.

Having it come to be a reality and to be a part of that, that means a great deal to me. I take great pride in that that I probably don't deserve. But it still matters to me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It is a big deal, I will say. What do you think was your biggest challenge while working out here?

HOMAN: I think it was those early years as a secretary, because for one thing I had some difficulties in my personal life at that time. It was that sense of powerlessness, being female in that all-male environment, starting that so young. That was the biggest thing.

Part of it was because I was reasonably bright, and I was getting an education, and I wanted an education. It would be so frustrating to spend so much of my day walking from Building 30 to Building 1, taking papers back and forth, making copies. I wasn't all that far into a business degree with ideas and interests and knowledge beyond the kind of work that I was doing. That was probably the hardest part of it.

I don't remember now exactly the specifics of what I was trying to do, but I can remember at one point making a suggestion in my office about changing the way some things were filed, and I was told, "No, this is the way we do it." Those were things that I was responsible for, putting those things away. It was things like that, that feeling of just not having any say in what you did or how you did it.

As that started changing, that made a big difference for me. I don't know if maybe deep down I'm some kind of control freak or what. But that part was really the hardest part for me. I was frustrated. I spent so much time in night school as well as working a full week as a single mom. I actually worked two jobs for a while, so there was a period of time when I was working every other weekend and going to night school and working full-time. Now I look back on that, and I can't imagine how I even did it to be honest. There's no way.

DAVID HOMAN: Post office.

HOMAN: Yes. I didn't put any of that in my report. I actually did leave at one point and worked for the Postal Service for about six months.

ROSS-NAZZAL: More money?

HOMAN: I went to work in Dickinson at the Dickinson post office. The reason why I did it was because at the time I had a brother-in-law who was working there. He was a college student, and he could work part-time. I thought that if I went to work there, I could work part-time and I could take college classes during the day. I thought I would like that a whole lot better.

I went to work there. But the post office that I worked at was very different than the one that he worked at. My hours were random, so I couldn't take classes because I might be working in the middle of the afternoon, or I might be working at 5:00 a.m. I didn't know what it was going to be. That seemed to be deliberate.

That was the difference between JSC and the Postal Service. The Postal Service, there was always this tension between management and the employees that were union. I had never seen that before and didn't know anything about that.

So I was really fortunate because I went back to work. I called the administrative officer for MPAD. I was already pregnant, I was at least three months pregnant, and asked if I could go back, and he helped me. He not only helped me go back. He helped me get an increase of pay to the hourly rate I had been making at the Postal Service, which was a lot more than what I had made. I went back as a GS-2, and I can't remember. I don't think I was temporary still. I wasn't showing for a couple months, so I got by with that for a while. I was so glad to be back at JSC, because those two environments were just so different. I had a lot more appreciation for JSC after that.

DAVID HOMAN: Also every time the post office got a raise you would get a raise, to a certain point.

HOMAN: Maybe so.

DAVID HOMAN: I thought you said you were the highest paid secretary out there.

HOMAN: By the time I got my 5 yes. Because they continued to try and match that. That's probably true. Even as I got promoted as a secretary. It wasn't so much that it was tied to that. It was tied to it, but I didn't get raises whenever they got raises. When I got a raise, I went to the highest level that was closer to them until I caught up with them.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Nice. That's great.

HOMAN: Yes, it worked out really well for me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I don't have any more questions. But I wonder if there was anything that you wanted to add.

HOMAN: No, I don't think so.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I enjoyed this tremendously, so I appreciate you coming in. Thank you so much.

HOMAN: It was fun for me.

[End of interview]