

**NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
EDITED ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT**

RICHARD O. "DICK" COVEY
INTERVIEWED BY JENNIFER ROSS-NAZZAL
HOUSTON, TEXAS – 28 AUGUST 2014

ROSS-NAZZAL: Today is August 28, 2014. This telephone oral history with Dick Covey is being conducted in Houston, Texas, for the JSC Oral History Project. The interviewer is Jennifer Ross-Nazzal, assisted by Sandra Johnson. Thanks again for taking some time and thinking about your classmates. I wanted to start with a question—it was something you shared with us years ago when you sat down with the oral history project—and that was when you first came to Houston for the meet and greet in January of '78. You mentioned that Judy [Judith A. Resnik] had lost her voice. She received a lot of ribbing from your classmates for that, and I wondered how she reacted and how that camaraderie just developed so quickly in that class?

COVEY: Judy was pretty special in that she was very accommodating from the standpoint of she could give as well as she could take. So any ribbing that she got, I'm sure she found other ways to get back at us. I don't recall exactly what it was. At that time period, of course, that was just during the initial time we were there for introductions, I think in January or early February of '78. Everybody's coming around trying to introduce themselves and say hi, and she can't even say, "Hi, I'm Judy," but everybody knew who Judy was. I think it was more of an interesting side note than anything else. She handled herself completely well.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was talking with Donna Mullane on Tuesday, and I found it so interesting because she kept talking about all of the people that she knew. Did you know a lot of people in that group that had been selected by your tours at other Air Force bases?

COVEY: Yes. That helped a lot. Of course, I knew Mike [Richard M.] Mullane very well. We were in the same flying organization when we were selected. I knew Steve [Steven R.] Nagel; we had flown together for years in the Air Force and had overlapped at Test Pilot School. I knew Loren [J.] Shriver; he was in a common program as me from the Air Force Academy [Colorado Springs, Colorado], but he also overlapped my Test Pilot School class. He and I were both flying for the F-15 Joint Task Force, although I was in Florida and he was in California. We were doing that at the time of the selection. I knew Jon [A.] McBride because he had been at Air Force Test Pilot School same time I had been, so I knew him from that. I'm trying to think. Guy [S.] Gardner, I'd known for years; same thing there, he overlapped at Test Pilot School. Ellison [S.] Onizuka had been in my Test Pilot School class, and we had known each other for four or five years.

I was thinking there was a few of the Air Force guys I didn't know, but a large number of them I did. That certainly helped facilitate the integration of the group, and the Navy guys were the same way. A lot of the Navy guys knew each other. Probably the most disparate group were the civilians. They all came from different backgrounds, different types of jobs, so they didn't have that immediate group of friends and associates that they knew as those of us in the Navy and the Air Force did.

ROSS-NAZZAL: What are your recollections of those first couple of days that you were down here? Did you spend much time getting to know the women, or was it more about this is JSC and looking for a house, and those sort of things?

COVEY: Yes, it was more of that. Of course you're trying to get to know all of the people in the group, and the women included, but there were a lot more people in the class that I didn't know than I did know. Knowing that you're going to spend a lot of time with these people over the next decade, there was immediately trying to at least get to know them, understand who they are, what they looked like, sounded like, and how they thought. There was some of that, but it was limited. We were pretty busy and a lot of us were doing disparate things, like looking for houses.

I looked forward to meeting all the members of the class, but I do remember that there's a lot of curiosity about the women because most of us in the military had come from a background where we hadn't worked with women in an operational environment. These were women that were going to be part of an operational environment, and so we were curious about who they were or what they had done, what they were really like. It wasn't just limited to the women—a lot of the civilian astronauts themselves were much the same type of curiosity.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You mentioned Mike Mullane. He wasn't very, I guess, I'm not sure what the word is to use, but in his book [*Riding Rockets: The Outrageous Tales of a Space Shuttle Astronaut*], he talks about how he didn't really think that women should be astronauts, but you had also told us that you had worked with a woman at the time, Leslie [F.] Holley. Do you think

that experience helped you in any way when you came and knew you were going to be working with other professional women?

COVEY: I'm sure it did. I'd come out of the Air Force fighter attack community. There were very few women even at that time and through the mid-seventies that were even involved on the maintenance side of aircraft operations, certainly not on the flight operations side. The idea then, when I went to test pilot school, that there was a woman flight test engineer that was going to be in our class was in itself a novelty. She was the very first. For a year, I got to work and fly with Leslie. I think it was probably very good experience for me relative to then going into the first astronaut class that had [women]. We found ways to accommodate any potential barriers, I guess, and make that work. It worked well for us in Test Pilot School, and I think that helped me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Do you remember if you told the interview committee that you had worked with her?

COVEY: I don't remember that I did.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was curious about that. Mike Mullane sort of paints that interesting picture of these military test pilots who didn't necessarily think the women should be there or should be astronauts. Were you able to temper some of those attitudes and say, "Hey, look, guys, I worked with this woman; they're top-notch," whatever?

COVEY: I, as opposed to Mike, have different recollections. I don't recall a whole lot of—I don't remember people, particularly the test pilots, saying that they thought this was wrong or it was not the right way for the Astronaut Corps to be developed. You have to remember, Mike was in a competitive position with these women. The pilots, the test pilots like myself, were not. They weren't going to compete for our jobs or flight assignments. They were on their own, competing against Mike Mullane and the other mission specialists. I don't remember anything from the test pilot side with that. If you're talking about the group of astronauts that had remained in the Corps after the Apollo missions and were waiting to fly the Space Shuttle, they were predominantly test pilot background, but everything I recollect—and maybe I just don't recollect anything negative—I didn't see their approach or treatment of the women any differently than the rest of us. I never read his book, so I don't know.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh you didn't, okay. He really paints himself as this chauvinist pig, basically.

COVEY: He was; he always told the worst jokes, right in front of his wife, too, but we expected it of Mullane.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It's a pretty funny book. If you have a chance, you might want to pick it up. I've always wondered if some of it was particularly over the top, to push sales.

COVEY: Yes, I think a little bit of it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Once you came to Houston, I think it was in July, there was a lot of socialization, as I understand it, amongst the class. Can you talk about any of those events? Do you remember the women being involved in some of those activities like barbecues or happy hours, things like that?

COVEY: I remember them being involved. I don't remember specifics about any of that stuff. It was part of, okay, we're a class; we're going to get together. We'll go have a beer together, that's how you get to know people. The women were included, and they came and not all of them. They came in varying degrees. I don't remember Shannon [W. Lucid] being very involved in after work, "Let's go get a beer" type of thing. She had a family, and she tended to stay with her family. The other women were probably more disposed toward joining in and doing that. I don't remember anything remarkable or special about it, other than it was just the TFNGs [Thirty-Five New Guys], all of us collectively, getting together whenever.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you play on Mr. [George W.S.] Abbey's softball team?

COVEY: I did not. In fact, I don't think I ever even went to a softball game. There's some of us that didn't do that. It's legend that that was a big deal, and that some of the women participated in it. I know a lot of the other astronauts that did. I know Pinky [George D.] Nelson and Steve [Steven A.] Hawley were big participants in the softball stuff. I don't remember some of the folks that I hung out with, more like Ox [James D.A.] van Hoften, necessarily being involved in it. It wasn't everybody; it was a smaller part of the group.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think Anna [L.] Fisher told me she figured out pretty early on that playing softball and going out for drinks with George was an important part of her career.

COVEY: Yes, and that was probably true.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you ever play racquetball or squash with Kathy [Kathryn D.] Sullivan?

COVEY: No.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did any of the women make an effort to reach out to your wife and get to know her?

COVEY: Not anything exceptionally that I can remember. Just casually passing, in terms of the social events we would be at together.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You guys also spent a lot of time that first year training, you went to other Centers, and you did some water survival training. Did you have to go to Homestead Air Force Base [Florida] with the women?

COVEY: No. I was fully qualified, so I did not do that. I think I flew down to pick someone up or to drop them off in the T-38, but I don't even remember who it was and I don't have the recollection of exactly what that was. I remember going to Homestead to pick somebody up, but that was it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's kind of an interesting training exercise, from what I understand.

COVEY: It is.

ROSS-NAZZAL: My take on things is that the women really tried to blend in with you as a group and really become one of the guys and really try not to make any sort of waves. How do you think the women were able to do that?

COVEY: They were all very bright people, and I think they were well selected. I would say they were much better selected for compatibility and integration into the Astronaut Office than some of the later choices that we made. I think because of that, they wanted to be as successful as possible and they seemed to collectively understand that that wasn't by trying to make themselves exceptional in any way, either in treatment or whatever. They worked very hard to do the same things that we did. The Astronaut Office was very clear too that they weren't giving them anything different than they were giving the rest of us in training. I think that helped. I think the key to me was the selection of the right six people.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How would you describe those six women? How would you characterize them? I guess each one individually, I should be more specific.

COVEY: Collectively, they were extremely accomplished, and in general they were young. That set them apart a little bit. Individually, Judy was by far and away the easiest one to talk with, to

engage with; she was just easy to get along with. Very comfortable to be around and made herself an enjoyable person to be around. Not that the others didn't, but Judy was the easiest from that standpoint. Sally [K. Ride], to me, was always a little bit harder, and that was for me, for whatever reason, but clearly was bright, athletic, and another fun person to be with. Shannon, the mother, the family person, the older, the more mature; she had a wicked sense of humor. She never let anybody get away with anything. She was the anti-Mullane person, if any of them were. She would not put up with his crap. [M.] Rhea [Seddon] and Kathy and Anna, I don't know. It's not like I distinguished any of them for any one particular thing more than the other, that I recollect.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You mentioned Shannon wouldn't let anybody get away with anything. Can you think of an example or two?

COVEY: No, I can't think of anything specific. Just her wicked Oklahoma comebacks, probably be the way to look at it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You had mentioned that you didn't really see the women being treated any differently. The women that we've talked to said that they really didn't encounter any significant issues, and that NASA really felt like home to them. Why do you think NASA has been so successful integrating women into the Astronaut Corps compared to the military? They seem to have a lot of difficulty integrating women. You're constantly hearing stories in the news about issues that they have.

COVEY: I can start with one thing. If you look at the level of maturity and expertise and professionalism that exists, and I'll just use the Astronaut Office, but in NASA in general, it's very accommodating. The type of people that work at NASA tend to be more accommodating of diversity across the board and bringing it into the workforce, whether it's Shuttle operations or flight operations or engineering. They were already doing that, so bringing women into the Astronaut Office was just kind of like, "Okay, yes, now we've integrated this last aspect of it." I think that has a lot to do with it. You get into the military and then the level of maturity and professionalism is lower. It's a bigger group, it's not as select a group, and so therefore you probably have more what I'll call outliers of people's acceptance of women and diversity into it. That's one aspect of it.

The other aspect is even though flying in space is a hazardous and dangerous business, combat's a whole different thing. Combat is a different thing, and I think that has to do with some of it. A lot of people that you fly into space, you wouldn't ask to go into combat. To me, that's the big differential. That's what's made it tougher for integration of women into the military, at all levels of the military. It's because it's a killing game. There's a lot more resistance to women being a part of the killing game than there is to women flying into space.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's an interesting perspective. One that I had not thought of. Do you think that gender or sex was ever an issue in the Astronaut Office?

COVEY: Again, in my time and with this group, there weren't any women that were competing for the same assignments or flight assignments that I might get, so my perspective is probably different than someone who was a mission specialist and saw what they might think was a bias

one way or the other relative to the women. I certainly didn't feel it, and I didn't sense it. It wasn't like they said, "Well, okay, she got that flight assignment because she's a woman," or, "They didn't assign her because she was a woman." I didn't see that. The way they assigned the women and the integration of the rest of the mission specialists into the assignments, it wasn't anything that I sat there and said, "Okay, yes, they are against the women, or they're for the women."

ROSS-NAZZAL: I do think that women seemed to have limited access to certain things, like obviously the men's locker room. Do you think that there were some positions that could have helped women gain access to those areas or those same networks?

COVEY: No, I don't think that made a difference, what went on in the locker room.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you know Carolyn [L.] Huntoon at all when you were in the office?

COVEY: I knew Carolyn from the interview process. As I recall, I think she may have been on my interview panel, but I don't remember for sure. She was very much involved in the integration of the women early on, and always around as a mother figure, sort of. I knew her. I knew that she was there helping, I would say, probably as much as anything.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was curious about the women's movement and the civil rights movement. Did either of those movements have any impact on you or your family?

COVEY: My background was that although my mother did not work outside the home, she always had a great deal of respect for women and women's potential. I always felt my mother—and she would have said it—that she had never achieved her full potential. My wife was working when I met her, and she continued to work with the exception of a few years when we were moving around in the military and it wasn't possible for her to, but she continued to work throughout our married lives. I guess I had a perspective that women have a place in the family and the workforce and eventually in the military and in NASA. It was always like, it's not a matter of they should or shouldn't be; it was a matter of when. I come from a background that that's okay. It probably helped me that my wife worked, it probably helped me that when I went to Test Pilot School, that Leslie Holley was there. Certainly I didn't look at any under-riding women's issues or whatever as doing anything other than opening up venues that should be open for women anyway. I don't know if that helps you or not.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It does help, yes. So many of the people I've talked to have told me how the Astronaut Office is really like a family. I was curious how that impacted the development of relationships between you and your classmates.

COVEY: I don't know if it was so much a family as a close association. It was not unlike a flying squadron. I would not ever characterize it as family, but there is a closeness that develops between people who fly and go into combat together or into space together. When you serve with those people and you spend a lot of time with those people in operational environments, whether it's flying aircraft or flying into space, training for both of those, you develop close relationships. Like anyplace else, you have some that are closer than others. It's not,

“Everybody’s my good buddy,” and it’s not, “Everybody gets along with everybody.” There were certain people that I sought out and we became best of friends, but there were others in our class that I could say, “Yes, okay, I know them. I trained with them, they’re associates, but they’re not my best friends.” They’re not my family necessarily, either, but they are my associates. They are close associates, and you’re very tight because of the experiences that you share.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you develop any close relationships or friendships with any of the women?

COVEY: Not particularly close with any of them. The closest was Judy. Again, it was just for whatever reasons, like I said earlier, she was easy to be around and with. So like the other people that I found to be easy to be around and with, I developed friendship with her that was probably closer than the other women.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I wish I’d had a chance to talk with her. So many people do talk about Judy just being this extraordinary individual and their relationships with her seem to be so strong. Your class was pretty large, Thirty-Five New Guys, and I understand you were split into the red group and the blue group. Can you talk about that and any rivalry?

COVEY: Of course, they divided us in order to be more effective in the way that we did some of our group training and stuff, and I was on the red team. I can’t remember how they sorted out who was on red and who was on blue. I think Rick [Frederick H.] Hauck led the red team. I think Dick [Francis R.] Scobee may have led the blue team, kind of as the leader. As far as

rivalries, I don't remember much, other than I know we'd play some touch football against each other. We may have had some other athletic contests or some contests, but I don't remember much about that.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you work with any of the six women prior to being assigned to your first mission in any sort of technical assignments?

COVEY: No, I did not.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you ever fly with any of the women in the T-38s?

COVEY: I did. I'm certain that I flew with Judy and Anna, but I don't remember any others. I must have.

ROSS-NAZZAL: They all needed backseat time, I'm sure, and that was a while back, thinking back to '78-'79, that was a long time ago. Another theme that I was looking at is the fact that the Astronaut Office, really until '78, had been a test pilot office. Even the scientist-astronauts who were selected before had to go to Test Pilot School, so I'm curious how you saw the mission specialists adjusting themselves to this hierarchy. It's a civilian agency, but it's almost like a military world within that. Can you talk about that?

COVEY: Yes. To be correct, I don't think that the science-astronauts went to Test Pilot School. They all went through Air Force T-38 undergraduate pilot training, so they were all trained as

pilots, but they did not go to another year of Test Pilot School, I'm pretty sure about that. A little bit of a difference there. The nuance there is that they went through a similar flying training experience and then flew T-38s as pilots in command, whereas the mission specialists that came in in '78 were the first astronauts not to then get sent off to go through undergraduate pilot training and go through a year of that and come back as fully qualified jet pilots. Great people like Joe [Joseph P.] Allen still, in my mind, even though he had that operational experience or flight experience and flew front-seat in the T-38, he was more of not a test pilot mentality. He was very much a Ph.D. that flies jets mentality. I'll just put that as just slightly different. I would not characterize the office itself as being a test pilot mentality—whatever that is.

The older guys, the guys that were there before, and I think there were like 26 or so in the office, some mid-twenties. [The office was] a mix between people who would be Space Shuttle pilots and people who would be Space Shuttle mission specialists. I think those guys like Joe Allen that had been there already had pretty much broken the ground for mission specialist women and men alike to come in, fit in, and be accepted in the office. I think they had laid more of the groundwork, had already been there. Two differences: one, these people are not going to necessarily all fly front seat T-38—although a lot of our mission specialists who were jet-qualified did, Ox van Hoftens and Norm [Norman E.] Thagards and folks like that—they're now going to fly 38s but they're not all coming from a professional flying background.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You wouldn't agree with an assessment that some of the mission specialists have said that they were second-class citizens in the office?

COVEY: They may have felt that way because they didn't have the luxury of saying, "I'm going to go fly a T-38." They had to find someone to fly it with them. That small nuance may have made them feel a little bit less than the pilot astronauts or the mission specialists that were jet-qualified that also flew the T-38s as pilot in command. As far as assignments, technical assignments, there may have been some early on preference for people that had flight operations experience in certain jobs, so they may have felt that. I could go and I could pick and I could say, "Well, yes, but there was a reason for this and a reason for that," but I could see where they came in and say, "I don't get the same opportunities as those members of the Astronaut Office who are jet pilot qualified." That would be the thing that would make the difference, I think, in my mind.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Along those lines, I was thinking about the book, *The Right Stuff*, which I think came out around the time you guys were selected. [Tom Wolfe] created this interesting portrait of the test pilot astronauts. When I've talked to so many of the TFNG pilots who came in, they really don't seem to fit that image that he created. I'm wondering how you would describe some of your colleagues. Did they really fit this mold? Did you read the book, I guess, is the other question?

COVEY: Yes, I'm very familiar with the book. The evolution in the military flying community between 1957 and 1978, with 20-something years, it's hard to believe it was only 20 years, in fact it was almost 40 years ago. In that whole time period, there was a change starting with the educational background of people that went into military flying and becoming test pilots, and of the social experiences that those people had. Back in the fifties, people were dying a lot flying

jet airplanes. By the end of the Vietnam War, the number of people that died flying jet airplanes was way down relative to that. I think we were different kinds of people than the original astronauts. There are a lot of similarities in type-A personality, "no one's a better pilot than me. I'm going to work hard, and I fly in combat. I fly test flights; it's dangerous stuff, I do that," and so, therefore, I behave and act like someone who does dangerous things. That was moderated a little bit by the time we were selected, I believe. You might find one or two that might fit that category out of our group, but most were not. If you look at the advanced education, everything that the pilots even brought to the game is different.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Kind of a similar question along that line, no astronauts had been added to the Corps since '69, when the MOL [Manned Orbiting Laboratory] astronauts came in. Did you get a sense of how adding younger folks to the office changed the Astronaut Corps? Did you think there was any sort of generational divide between the TFNGs and the older Gemini and Apollo astronauts?

COVEY: We only had a few Apollo astronauts that were still there. Most of the people that were there had been in the later part of the Apollo program, or had not flown—had been in Apollo, had not flown, like Joe [H.] Engle—or they had come in with the MOL program. We had a generational divide in the TFNGs. We had people that were as young as—I think Steve Hawley was the youngest, but the oldest was like John [M.] Fabian and Dick Scobee, who were 12 or 13 years older than the youngest members of our class. That was a big spread in itself. I'm trying to think if I really felt like there was any type—we were the new guys, we were the young guys, but just like any operational unit where you have older guys that are leading the way and the

younger guys who are coming along and are learning from the older guys, that seem to be, to me it was not an unusual fit—at least based more on my flying background and going into squadrons or test organizations where I was always young. I was young, so I didn't see any difference in the way we were treated.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I wanted to ask about jokes in the class. There seemed to be plenty of opportunity for a lot of pranks and ribbing. For instance, when Hoot [Robert L.] Gibson married Rhea Seddon—and then I'm assuming that also happened to Steve Hawley and Sally, when they married. Do you remember any of the jokes that took place as a result of those events?

COVEY: I do not—not a thing.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you ever share an office with any of the women when you first came to JSC?

COVEY: After several years, Ox van Hoften and I shared an office with Anna Fisher. I'm trying to think when it was. It was before Ox got assigned to his first flight, and so it was probably in the '81 timeframe. After they made some crew assignments, they had to move people around, so Anna got moved in with us. That's about as much as I remember.

ROSS-NAZZAL: No interesting anecdotes. What are your recollections of that meeting where it was announced that Sally would be flying on STS-7, and your classmates also got assigned to fly on STS-7, 8, and 9? What do you remember about that meeting?

COVEY: I think there was a lot of excitement about the fact that the first members of our class were being assigned to those flights, and of course, there was excitement. For those of us that weren't assigned, there was a little bit of disappointment that we weren't part of that. I think it was a natural thing that the diversity in our group was being reflected in the assignments itself, and that it was historic, actually, or setting up history. Being a part of all that, it was all kind of exciting just to have that happen.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Any surprise that Sally was selected as the first woman?

COVEY: I think a lot of us thought it was going to be Judy, so that was the only surprise. At the same time, it was like there weren't any bad choices and Sally was a very good one.

ROSS-NAZZAL: One thing that I was thinking about, Sally and Kathy were pretty athletic. Do you think that contributed to their ability to mesh well within the class?

COVEY: Yes, it probably did. The whole idea that they could go out and play softball with the guys, I think that probably did help in some ways. Any way that any astronaut, man or woman, can find to be a part of those activities that are strengthening relationships was important. That allowed them to do some things that maybe some of the others didn't.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I know you said you didn't read Mike Mullane's book, but one of the ways that he described Sally is as a pretty ardent feminist. Did you ever see her exhibit any of those ideas or issues?

COVEY: Not in any way that was either offensive or remarkable to me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think I sent you those documents that I came across, where Judy was working training and she assigned you and Steve Nagel to fly in the SMS [Shuttle Mission Simulator] with Rhea Seddon and Shannon Lucid. Do you remember doing those simulations with those two?

COVEY: I do not. I saw that and I went, "Oh really? I kind of remember that." I meant to ask Rhea when we were at Steve's funeral, "Rhea, do you remember this?" We must have done some training sessions together, but I don't recall them.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I thought it was interesting. It was with a whole stack of training documents where Judy was trying to make sure that everyone had a chance to train. From what I understand, training wasn't going very well in the early days. I do want to ask, you flew with Bill [William F.] Fisher on your first mission. I wondered if you could talk at all about the way the families would bond for a mission, and if you had any recollections about including Anna in that event, and maybe how you saw her in a different way—not necessarily an astronaut, but as an astronaut spouse?

COVEY: Any time you train together over a period of a year or whatever it is, the crews spend a lot of time together and we did tend to try to get our families together. Not all the time, but on occasion, we'd do that. Kathy got to know Anna as a spouse of a crewmember, I guess you could put it that way. She, as best I recollect, just joined right in and played the role, the spouse role. Of course her knowledge and having flown helped a lot, both Bill and for everybody else, other spouses. I don't know if I'd say there was anything that Kathy said, "Boy, it was really great to have Anna there." I don't think that ever happened.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was curious about that. What do you think is the legacy of the first six women astronauts, if there is one?

COVEY: I think their legacy is collectively, in an era when women were breaking new ground, that they were breaking the high ground there. They came in at a time to be a part of the beginning of Space Shuttle flights and to represent not only themselves, but women in general as being equals and partners of men in human spaceflight—truly making it human spaceflight. That's going to be their legacy.

To me, another part of it is that NASA did an amazing job of selecting six women who could do that without—it's not like they were all equal or all perfect or all as good as each other as some of the others, but collectively, they weren't any fall-outs that might have come out of that type of selection. It was risky for NASA to go and select women to join into this business and do it the way that they did, and NASA did a good job of finding the right people.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I wonder if you have any other thoughts or comments or something I didn't ask about but you think that I should be aware of?

COVEY: I think the fact that I look back at the six of them coming in and in retrospect, as being such a non-event is largely due to the fact that one, I can't remember a lot, but mostly, it was a pretty seamless integration. It worked very well, at least from my perspective. I'm sure as you talk to the women, there were things that they found to be harder and not as seamless as I might think they were. In general, I just think it worked out well. I was glad to be a part of it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: It's interesting. When I talk to people, I think that there was concern at the beginning that it was going to be such a big deal, but everyone I talk to said it wasn't a big deal, so that's an interesting comment. I did want to ask you. Do you have any thoughts about who else I might talk to about the women, or even the early days of the Shuttle program before *Challenger* [STS-51L]? Any good interviews?

COVEY: Have you talked to Duane [L.] Ross?

ROSS-NAZZAL: He is on my list, actually, and I'm hoping to get him to talk. He retired and then he came back as a contractor.

COVEY: As an involved but observant person, he would be one that would be good to talk to. He knows everything, and what he might be able to share relative to the selection of the women,

things like that, that others don't recollect. That was his job. Jay [F.] Honeycutt, have you had an opportunity to talk to him?

ROSS-NAZZAL: We talked with him for the project, but not about the selection. He was also Mr. Abbey's deputy, is that correct?

COVEY: Yes, he was heavily involved in the 1978 selection process, heavily involved. He also was pretty directly involved in a lot of the astronaut candidate training, which would have involved some of the initial integration of it. Clearly, if you get a chance to talk to George, that'd be interesting because I'm sure his perspective is very different than a lot of other people's. Not that he will necessarily remember much or would tell you much, but Alan [L.] Bean, his job within the astronaut office was leading the astronaut candidates, so he was kind of our interface back into the rest of the office, if you would, at the time. He may know and have different perspectives on things, on how it really went. He would have seen, heard, and felt them. That would be a good one. I don't know—that's probably it.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's a good list, it definitely is. You reminded me, I need to call Mr. Abbey. He actually has agreed to talk with me; I just need to set up some time to talk with him.

COVEY: His perspective on it would be extraordinary.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Yes. I want to thank you for your time today. You gave me some great information. I really appreciate your insight. It's always fun, talking to people who were there

and were involved in the office and hearing your thoughts about what transpired and giving a new perspective in terms of ways to look at things.

[End of interview]