

OSU/NASA Education Projects: Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) Archive

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

Interview with Everett E. Collin, Session 2

Session 2
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R This is day two of our discussion and before we go any further, you wanted to clarify a point from yesterday's discussion.

E Right. The first contract was with Franklin Institute in 1960-61. In 1962, Educational Services in Washington, D.C. became involved, until 1966. Then UniTech Incorporated in Maryland and the University of Redlands in California were with the program until 1969. And then the contract went to Oklahoma State University in 1969 and continued there for the rest of my tenure, which ended in early 1974. Anything beyond that you're going to have to contact others, like Dr. Wiggins and Naomi Ford. They would have information concerning that; also Bill Nixon. (Ed. Note: The contract left OSU and was at California State University in Chico from 1975 to 1979. It returned to OSU in '79, where it has been since).

R Yesterday, we talked about the domestic beginning of the Spacemobile Program, the early years. What I'd like to do today is talk about the overseas program. That was also a big part of the early years of the Spacemobile Program. How did that start, and where did it go?

E Well, it started first with a request from Pakistan for the program because they had a rocket that they were readying to blast off. They wanted an education program to make the country aware of why and what they were doing with this rocket for space exploration. The request came in 1962 and Miles Dougherty was our lecturer that I selected to send overseas at that time. He conducted the program and was over there for probably a month or two. The report that Miles filed with me after his return is in my files. Following that, we had other requests, including a specific request from President Kennedy to have a unit sent to Venezuela in 1963. Because of the mountainous country and other problems over there in terms of transportation, we had to special order a 4-wheel drive, a General Motors truck or van and it was outfitted. John Nesbitt was then scheduled to conduct the program in the country. After that, the unit was used in other South American countries, with Ellwood Johnson contributing as a lecturer in

Venezuela and some of the other countries there.

R Dougherty, Nesbitt and Johnson -- are they still alive?

E Dougherty, yes. Dougherty is with the U.S. Department of Education, if he hasn't retired. John Nesbitt is at Pittsfield, Massachusetts and Ellwood Johnson is in San Diego, California.

R What about the training that was involved in these first international Spacemobile programs in Pakistan and Venezuela? What was your involvement with the different government agencies and what did it take to get them going?

E We worked directly through the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA). They assigned a specific person to work with me in the U.S. Information Agency. In the State Department, we had to work with different people because in the various countries we went into, we had to conduct and coordinate the programs through the U.S. embassies. So those agencies were involved in getting passports and helping ship equipment overseas and arranging for caring for our personnel when they were overseas.

R What about the language barriers? How did you overcome that?

E There was always a person assigned for translation. For instance, in South America, mostly Spanish was spoken, with some Portuguese also. In Europe, we had French-trained lecturers, as well as translators assigned to them. I also completed a French course to help train lecturers.

R How big did the overseas program become?

E We served 50 countries, ranging from India and Australia to those in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Central America. We covered all the countries in Central America and also Yugoslavia, which was ruled by President Tito behind the Iron Curtain at that time. The overseas programs were discontinued after '65, due to budget cuts.

R Did the governments have to make specific requests in order to receive the program?

E Yes, they had to make their requests before we would serve them. We in turn then asked them to provide their education person for us to train as lecturers and then we had follow up. In some instances, we sent lecturers overseas to follow up, but in most instances we worked through the U.S. embassy to monitor the programs with the country, so that we knew the equipment was maintained properly and that the lecturers were performing properly. In each country, the U.S. embassy was provided with all the information necessary and they in turn gave us feedback as to how the program was being monitored.

R The vans were shipped over from the U.S. to the countries?

E That's correct. That was handled through the U.S. State Department, because they were the ones that had to arrange for the shipping.

R Yugoslavia was the only Communist country that requested a

program?

E Yes.

R Do you recall Tito's reason?

E No.

R It must be in the documents somewhere.

E It probably is.

R Okay. We'll pick this up when we come back later talking about President Kennedy's involvement.