

President's Page  
February, 1984  
Stanley R. Mohler, M.D.

STS-8: Good Workers Doing a Good Job

The five man crew of Shuttle flight series number eight (August 30-September 5, 1983) made spectacular accomplishments in the Challenger: a satellite deployment for communication, television and weather observation use by a nation of 700,000,000 people: India; a night take off and a night landing; the chronologically oldest space flight astronaut to date - 54 year old Dr. Bill Thornton - physician and physicist; Lt. Colonel Guion Bluford, USAF, with an aerospace engineering doctorate, the first U.S. black astronaut to fly in space, who, quite rightly in my view, seeks the day when skin color of an astronaut is no longer news (the same "non-news" should also now hold for gender and chronologic age). These two astronauts along with Captain Richard Truly, USN, Commander of STS-8, USN Commander Dan Brandenstein and Lt. Commander Dale Gardner, all deserve our congratulations for a superb mission, expertly accomplished. I have personally been informed by Dr. Thornton that the productivity of the medical studies he conducted was "approximately doubled" by the cooperative team work of his onboard colleagues. STS-8 Commander Truly established a mission environment that markedly enhanced the collection of medical data.

The significant STS-8 achievements highlight the fact that in 1984, adults scientifically require only three personal criteria for flight, whether in air or in space:

1. Ability to perform;
2. Freedom from impairing disease;
- and 3. Motivation to work.

(Cont'd on page 2)



Gender, race or chronologic age are no longer justifiable criteria for occupations. Behavioral, medical, and biological studies today do not justify the across-the-board lingering remnants of the now obsolete restrictions still existing in a few rearguard municipal, county, state and federal regulatory activities. Some holdover private sector organizations still attempt to treat certain of their human resources as dated group throw-away machine components having common working or shelf lives.

Voluntary retirement by veteran healthy capable workers is an acceptable option by all concerned. However, the involuntary forced retirement of healthy capable individuals is neither morally nor scientifically supportable.

Aerospace progress continues to shatter old concepts and practices. International air travel propels millions of passengers each year between countries, producing cultural shocks for many as new information and viewpoints are experienced on trips to unfamiliar places and people. Eyes are opened to new practices that often are adopted when the advantages are clearly appreciated. This spread of new developments is the essence of progress in the modern world and aerospace activities hasten this process. Those with vested interests in the status quo or with obtunded cerebration will often grind their teeth, tremble mightily and lash out at these inevitably occurring progressive changes. \*

Congratulations to NASA for spearheading these many pioneering advances that characterize its work.

It is now time for all in the field of aerospace medicine to abolish the old stereotypes and pull together on these issues. Perhaps a bit of proper lubrication applied to those ever decreasing

(Cont'd on page 3)

numbers of still squeaking intransigents lurking in the background shadows will quiet their strident protests to these inevitable changes. This, or their ultimate transition to the ranks of our Chapter Eternal, will remove the last fetters to getting rapidly on with the job. The year Two Thousand, A.D. and beyond is coming, ready or not. Those not up to these evolutionary changes better get off the ship or suffer the fate of the silhouetted anachronist.