



1

00:00:11,860 --> 00:00:16,320

Hi, I'm Rhonda Smitherman-Hickman –Chief
Information Office Lead at the Michoud Assembly

2

00:00:16,320 --> 00:00:18,140

Facility.

3

00:00:18,140 --> 00:00:22,470

When asked to do this video for Women History
Month I was extremely excited.\h

4

00:00:22,470 --> 00:00:26,980

I started working at MAF 27 years ago and
could not ask for a better job or better group

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00:00:26,980 --> 00:00:28,320

of folks to work with.

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00:00:28,320 --> 00:00:32,960

I received a Mathematics and Computer Science
Degree from Southeastern Louisiana University

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00:00:32,960 --> 00:00:38,579

back in the 80's --- My parents bought me
a IBM PC, amber screen with a 300 baud modem.\h

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00:00:38,579 --> 00:00:42,320

I thought I was big time – the only one
in my dorm with a computer that could login

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00:00:42,320 --> 00:00:44,870

to the mainframe after lab hours.\h

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00:00:44,870 --> 00:00:49,370

I can remember my first programming class
and how excited I was to be one of two women

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00:00:49,370 --> 00:00:52,300

in a predominately male environment.\h\h

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00:00:52,300 --> 00:00:55,820

And walking in to a Calculus 4 class with
and being told that the Algebra class was

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00:00:55,820 --> 00:00:59,510

down the hall\h -- "like a girl couldn't
handle Calc 4".\h

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00:00:59,510 --> 00:01:04,610

All of these experiences challenged me and
prepared me for the work place!\h\h

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00:01:04,610 --> 00:01:07,000

\h
I worked for NASA when we introduced the first

16

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:12,530

3 com file-servers, used 5 1/4 inch floppies
as external media, programmed the first LAN

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00:01:12,530 --> 00:01:17,310

application using dbase, thought 10 Meg Bernoulli's
the size of text books was the greatest thing

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00:01:17,310 --> 00:01:19,040

since sliced bread.\h

19

00:01:19,040 --> 00:01:22,430

Technology has and is changing at the speed
of light....\h\h

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00:01:22,430 --> 00:01:24,890

\h
NASA has always been very supportive of women

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00:01:24,890 --> 00:01:26,280

in the work place.\h

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00:01:26,280 --> 00:01:31,110

I have personally experienced this – I have two young men, Ryan and Rhett that literally

23

00:01:31,110 --> 00:01:36,240

grew up during my years at MAF – working for NASA—I had challenges that forced me

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00:01:36,240 --> 00:01:41,510

to balance a career and being a mom – in an office environment with mostly men.

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00:01:41,510 --> 00:01:45,479

Before Hurricane Katrina NASA provided an on-site day care facility.\h

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00:01:45,479 --> 00:01:49,320

It allowed me the opportunity to spend more time with my children – I would eat lunch

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00:01:49,320 --> 00:01:51,240

with them once or twice a week.\h

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00:01:51,240 --> 00:01:55,950

When they started school they would tell their classmates and teacher that their mom was

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00:01:55,950 --> 00:01:57,160

an astronaut.

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00:01:57,160 --> 00:02:02,340

I had to prove myself and my work while worrying when a child was sick, dealing with homework

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00:02:02,340 --> 00:02:07,850

and projects after an exhausting day, planning dinner, so on and so on – things that others

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00:02:07,850 --> 00:02:10,340

in my department did not have to focus on.\h

33

00:02:10,340 --> 00:02:14,159

As a woman his made me stronger and more determined
than ever!\h

34

00:02:14,159 --> 00:02:18,400

As women we have many challenges and obstacles
--- God made us very strong – we need to