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Victor Rhoder

A 1962 NASA/JSC Photographer, a 1961 Texas Southern University Graduate

[May 12, 2019, Douglas Yazell, Houston Texas USA]

(Readers can use the PDF version of this slide use the links in this article. The other version is JPEG.)

I came across this 1963 NASA Johnson Space Center (then Manned Spacecraft Center) news release and decided to publish it here. If I find additional public information about this professional photographer, I will add it here in the coming weeks.

I note in passing that in aerospace, drones are often called UAVs, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, an important example of misogyny. By definition, no human will occupy such vehicles as crew or passengers, but we note the presence of men in our too-often-unjust patriarchy by their absence. Contrary to many of my great friends and colleagues in the aerospace profession, I find other words to talk about manned space programs and vehicles. For example, NASA calls its new capsule the multi-purpose crew vehicle Orion. NASA web pages often talk about human space programs, no longer manned space programs. I am planning another news article here as soon as possible based on news from this month, an obituary for a woman astronaut, so to speak, a contemporary of the NASA Mercury 7, the first seven NASA astronauts.



HOUSTON, TEXAS -- Victor Rhoder, one of several negroes employed by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Manned Spacecraft Center, was a "free lance" photographer before joining MSC in July, 1962.

Now, a technical photographer, he assists engineering development at MSC by taking detailed, technical photographs of tests and equipment under test.

With no assigned "beat", Rhoder's work is highly varied.

One day he may float on a shrimp boat in Galveston Bay for 32 hours covering on film the flotation characteristics of a specially designed life raft.

Another time, airborne in an Air Force C-119, Rhoder may aim his camera on the descending canopy of a new parachute configuration during a drop test to capture on film the "aerodynamics" of canopy deployment.

Victor Rhoder was born on a small farm eight miles outside of Edna, Texas, on August 9, 1929. After rural schooling to the seventh grade, he commuted to Edna to continue his education through high school.

Add 1 - Rhoder

Rhoder came to Houston in 1950 to pursue employment and worked as an orderly in several Houston hospitals. He joined the U.S. Army and was sent to Fort Leonardwood (Missouri) for basic training, and to Fort Belvoir (Virginia) where he was trained as an instructor in the maintenance and operation of heavy equipment. Honorably discharged in 1954, he returned to Houston for several months, then was hospitalized at the Veterans Administration hospital with a service-connected disability for 14 months.

He went through Texas Southern University on the "G.I. Bill", and was graduated in 1961 with a bachelor of science degree in Industrial Education. At TSU, he worked on the school newspaper staff as a photographer, and was considered the "school photographer" for many TSU projects.

Rhoder is married to the former Majorie Chavis of Church Point, Louisiana. They have four children: Micheyl, 6; Andria Marie, 4; Victor III, 2; and Harold, 11 months.

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Above: Image credit:

https://www.nasa.gov/centers/johnson/pdf/83115main_1963.pdf