



The Museum of Flight Oral History Collection

The Museum of Flight
Seattle, Washington

Mark Armstrong

Interviewed by: Geoff Nunn

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Abstract:

Mark Armstrong is interviewed about his father, astronaut Neil Armstrong, as well as his own experiences with the Space Program during the 1960s and beyond. He describes his father's aviation and space career and shares details about his childhood, growing up in the midst of the Apollo 11 mission. He also touches on his professional career in technology. Topics discussed his childhood memories of his father, his interest in physics and software programming, his thoughts on the Space Program, and his position as a trustee at The Museum of Flight.

Biography:

Mark Armstrong was born on April 8, 1963 in Houston, Texas to astronaut Neil Alden Armstrong and his wife, Janet Elizabeth Sharon Armstrong. Around age seven, his family relocated to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he spent much of his youth. In 1969, when Armstrong was six years old, he and his family watched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida as his father, along with fellow crew members Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin, were launched aboard the Apollo 11 Saturn V space vehicle. He met his father at Ellington Air Force Base in Houston, Texas upon his return. After the completion of the Apollo 11 mission, the Armstrong family moved briefly to Washington, D.C. before returning to Cincinnati.

Armstrong attended undergraduate school at Stanford University, where he studied computer software, engineering, and philosophy. He graduated in 1986 with a bachelor's degree in physics. His first job after college was as a software writer consultant for Macintosh. He later went on to work for several startup companies as a software writer for Macintosh computers. By 1988, Armstrong was Vice President of Engineering at Pharos Technologies, Inc., which was followed by other administrative and executive roles with Symantec Corporation, WebTV Networks, Microsoft, and Scenario Learning. In 2009, he became co-owner of New Leaf Properties.

In 2012, Armstrong and his brother Rick attended an astronaut reunion and gala at The Museum of Flight, which inspired him to join the Museum's Board of Trustees.

Biographical information derived from interview and additional information provided by interviewee.

Interviewer:

Geoff Nunn is the Adjunct Curator for Space History at The Museum of Flight and also serves as an Exhibit Developer in the Museum's Exhibits Department. He holds a Master's degree in Museology (Museum Studies) from the University of Washington and has extensive experience working as an educator and exhibit developer at science and technology museums. At The

Museum of Flight, he serves as the resident historian and curator for spaceflight, leading the Museum's efforts to document the past, present, and future of aerospace.

Restrictions:

Permission to publish material from The Museum of Flight Oral History Program must be obtained from The Museum of Flight Archives.

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Mark Armstrong

[START OF INTERVIEW]

00:00:00

[Introduction and personal background]

GEOFF NUNN: All right. Good morning. It is October 20th, Thursday, 2016, and this is a Museum of Flight Oral History with Mark Armstrong. My name is Geoff Nunn. I am the Adjunct Curator for Space History here at The Museum of Flight. Mark, good morning.

MARK AMSTRONG: Hello.

GN: So just for our beginning purposes, could you please tell us your name and spell it for us?

MA: Mark Armstrong. M-A-R-K, A-R-M-S-T-R-O-N-G.

GN: Okay. And Mark, when were you born? When and where were you born, and where did you grow up?

MA: I was born in Houston on April 8th, 1963, and I grew up there until I was about—hmm—until I was, I guess, just shy—until I was seven years old. And then we moved to Washington, D.C., where I spent a year, and then we moved to just outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, and I spent the rest of my youth there.

GN: And who were your parents, what were your parents' names, and what did they do for a living?

MA: Neil Alden Armstrong was a test pilot, an astronaut, a naval aviator, a professor of aeronautics, and a businessman, I guess. And Janet Elizabeth Sharon Armstrong, my mother, worked at home. She ran our family farm once we moved to Ohio. And I have one brother, Rick Armstrong.

GN: Okay. And so your family farm in Ohio—going from the Astronaut Corps to a farm in Ohio, what prompted that decision and what was that like?

MA: I wasn't exactly consulted on that decision, but I think, you know, my father grew up on a farm—or was born on a farm—certainly didn't grow up on one, but he was born on a farm. And—let me start that over. My father was born on a farm. I think he had a lot of exposure to farm life when he was young, and perhaps that's just what he wanted to return to when he wanted to settle down after the flight.

GN: And was there a particular focus, a crop or anything that you—

MA: Soybeans, some corn, some wheat. And it's about 250 acres. And then also beef cattle.

GN: Okay. And did you have any brothers and sisters and what were their names?

MA: I have one brother, Eric Armstrong, and we—he always went by “Rick.” And I had a sister. Then she died when she was two, actually before I was born. Her name was Karen.

GN: And did your sister's death—did that affect the—sort of your family life after you came along? I know you were born after, so you didn't really—I suppose you had no experience with knowing her, but did it affect your family and in a noticeable way and how?

MA: Well, I'm sure it did. It's more of the absence of something, rather than the presence of something, so it's hard to describe how it affected things, how it affected our family. But you know, she was a—my brother was old enough to remember her and to play with her when she was young. And certainly, you know, it affected my mother and my father in different ways but very profoundly.

00:04:58

[Dad's selection to Astronaut Corps]

GN: And so you were not even born yet when your father was selected to the Astronaut Corps. Is that correct?

MA: That's correct. I was conceived but not yet born.

GN: And which—can you talk a little bit about your father's astronaut selection? When was he selected into the Astronaut Corps?

MA: I don't know the exact date. In 1962.

GN: As part of—

MA: Fall of 1962, I think.

GN: As part of the Gemini Program, correct?

MA: Yeah, it was called the New Nine. The Gemini was—it was the second set of astronauts that were selected.

GN: And did he apply for the Mercury Program when the original Mercury Seven were selected?

MA: He did not. He was working at Edwards Air Force Base, working on the X-15 Program on another experimental aircraft, and he—it was a difficult decision for him to leave that job, because it was—he loved it. He loved working on helping to design these high-

performance aircraft, and I don't think it was an easy decision for him to leave a job that he loved so much.

GN: What do you think he loved the most about working on the X-Planes Program?

MA: I think that as someone who wanted to be an aircraft designer from a very young age, he had the opportunity to really help shape the way these aircraft—the way they performed to the way they operated. And that was the perfect job for him. That was what he wanted to do. So I didn't—don't know if I answered your question, but—

00:07:16

[Dad's favorite aircraft and interest in flying]

GN: Yeah, I think so. And did he ever express having a favorite aircraft to fly, either in the X-Planes Program or—and/or in general?

MA: He—his favorite aircraft was the Bearcat. And that probably goes back to his, you know, days as a naval aviator. But he just really liked the way that machine, you know, performed.

GN: And—[fade out and fade in]. So I'm trying to remember my Grumman Cats. Is—the Bearcat was still prop-driven, wasn't it?

MA: Hm-hmm [affirmative], yeah.

GN: So it's interesting that your father, who wound up riding the most powerful rocket in the world, favored an old—towards the end of World War II—or Korean War—prop-driven aircraft.

MA: Well, you don't—I think for Dad, when asked about what type of aircraft he, you know, liked to fly the best, it had to do—it had—there were a lot of factors. You know, how responsive is it? You know, how maneuverable is it? You know, what kind of things can you do with it? You can't do much with a rocket, to be honest. Right? You're kind of just a passenger, and it's going to go where it's going to go. So in terms of, you know, the fun of flying, I don't think the—I don't think any of the rockets would be anywhere near the top of his list.

GN: Okay. Yeah. And flying was a major thing for him. Can you talk about how he got into flying and when he got his pilot's license?

MA: Yeah, he got his pilot's license pretty much on the day of his birthday, his 16th birthday. I'm sure before his driver's license. And he—you know, at that point he really wanted—as I said, he really wanted to design aircraft and make aircraft better. This is coming just, you

know—this time period is just after the war, and he's seen—and he's paid attention, by the way. My dad read every aviation magazine he could get his hands on.

But he'd seen how, you know, dramatically aircraft have changed over the course of the war, and he was, I think, intrigued by all those changes. And, you know, why are the wings more swept back on this airplane than on another airplane? And he was just fascinated by that, and that's what he wanted to do. And I think eventually he figured that, in order to really understand how to design an airplane, you needed to fly one and get on the inside and really feel it. And so he was drawn to flying, and I think that's how he got started.

GN: Wonderful. And you mentioned in our previous conversation some of the ways that your father would study these aircraft. Can you talk about—to some of the things that he did as a child in expressing his interests in aviation?

MA: Well, my dad read, as I mentioned earlier, every airline magazine or airplane magazine he could get his hands on. Not airline, but every airplane magazine he could get his hands on. And he would study them, and he would cut out certain airplanes and paste them on a sheet of paper, and he'd write little notes about that particular airplane or the characteristics of that airplane. And so he—you know, when he was 17 years old, he probably knew every airplane that was flying in that day. And why—you know, how fast it would go and, you know, what kind of armament it would have. He really studied that. And he was a very avid reader, so he would just read as much as he could get his hands on. So, you know, there—you know, we have these notebooks full of pages where he kept all these cutouts of airplanes and other—he has a collection of pictures of airplanes that he had seen personally. And he could identify an aircraft in just less than a second. You know, just at a glance. He had a lot of military training for that as well, so...

00:12:40

[Neil Armstrong's education and military training]

GN: Let's talk a little bit about your father's military training and that path. So he—can you talk a little bit about his education and his military career?

MA: He—let's see. So my father went to Purdue University on the G.I. Bill. And if I recollect correctly, it was two years of school, followed by three to four years of service and then another two years of school. So he went to Purdue to study aeronautics, and before he had finished his second year, he was pulled down to Pensacola because the Navy needed pilots. And he learned how to fly jets, went through his carrier qualifications, and then was assigned to the *Essex*, USS *Essex*. He flew 78 combat missions. Mostly I think his unit was focused on disrupting transportation of goods and food and supplies. So they were strafing bridges and bombing railroad pathways and things like that to try to stop this—the

movement of supplies. And then after he had fulfilled his obligations with the Navy, he came back and finished his degree at Purdue.

GN: And then how did he—what was—do you know how he transitioned from Purdue into his work at the NACA?

MA: [pauses] Let's see.

GN: And I realize this is off of the questions, so if you would prefer to move back to the script, we can.

MA: Yeah. No, it's okay. No, no, I just need to think about the answer. When he graduated, he—I think he probably—I don't know what jobs he actually applied to, but one of them was the NACA and I think that's where he wanted to go. And here was a college graduate in aeronautics that had a lot of flying experience, a lot of carrier experience, and I think that made him—put him near the top of the list of candidates that might go to work for NACA at the time. And I know that he was first stationed in Cleveland for a few months—three months, maybe. And then he was quickly transferred out to Edwards Air Force Base.

00:15:59

[Neil's service in Korea]

GN: So we've been talking a bit about your father's naval aviation career, and he saw quite a bit of action while he was flying in Korea. Can you talk a bit about that? And it sounds like one—in one particular mission, he had to bail out. Can you talk a little bit about what happened there and that experience?

MA: So my dad and his squadron were on a strafing run. And it was a supply line. It was either a railroad or a road they were trying to disrupt. And so he came in very low, and there was a wire—basically an aerial booby trap wire, a vertical wire that he didn't see. And he hit it, and it took off about six or eight feet of his right wing. So he was able to basically apply power and to get up to several hundred feet, but he didn't have much of a lift surface to operate the vehicle and he knew that he would never be able to land on the carrier. So he was able to fly out just beyond the beach line so he was over the ocean so he could bail out and land in the water, but he failed to recognize that the wind was blowing in. So he ejected, the plane went down, and his parachute drifted back over land. But fortunately, he had radioed and there was somebody there to pick him up. So a jeep came out, and he actually—the jeep contained an ex-roommate of his. So he had friends there to get him.

GN: Well, that's a—quite an interesting place to run into a—[laughter]—into an ex-roommate.

MA: Exactly. Yeah.

00:18:20

[X-Plane Project and growing up in the NASA environment]

GN: Wonderful. So your father went from a Navy career to working on the X-Plane Project. What do you think finally made him decide to take the jump to applying for the Astronaut Corps?

MA: Well, that's a tough question and one I'm not sure I know how to answer. But my guess would be that he listened to the—to John F. Kennedy's speech, and he felt persuaded that this was really important and something that he should be involved in.

GN: And so you—he was selected as an astronaut before you were born. When did you first become aware of the significance of your father's work?

MA: Probably not until I got into high school. So, you know, when you grow up in this environment where everyone around you works for NASA and mothers and fathers are working late and that—and you grow up there, that's the world that you know and you don't really have any other world to compare it to. That's your reality. So it wasn't until we kind of moved away from, you know, the—Houston and the family of NASA that I kind of could see how other people looked—you know, other people viewed those events.

00:20:35

[Astronaut family gatherings]

GN: And there's been a lot said about and written about the sort of—the families of the astronauts and what that culture was like. And you've, in sort of talking about this—did you have—were you friends with the children of the other astronauts? Was—were there close ties between the families?

MA: There were several reasons why you would be closely connected with other astronaut families. One was because you lived—you were neighbors. And there several clusters of, you know, sort of locations where astronauts tended to live. I don't really think that was—that was probably just happenstance, because the astronauts were brought in at the same time and there were only a certain number of houses that were being built at that time, and so they ended up being neighbors.

The other reason—so, you know, if you could ride your bike over to the Conrads', for example, the chances are that you would be friends with, you know, the kids of the Conrad family because they were neighbors. The other reason why you might get to know families, even if you weren't neighbors, is because your fathers were on a mission together. So once your—once an astronaut was assigned to a mission, that astronaut spent a lot of time either on the crew—the primary crew or the backup crew. That astronaut spent a lot of time with the other astronauts in that group. And so the families would spend time together, because they'd get together on weekends and have cookouts and, you know, family outings at

somebody's house and you'd play in the pool or whatever. So those were the reasons why families got to know each other, primarily.

00:22:54

[Incident on the Banana River *painting*]

GN: And there is a—there's an artifact that we've recently added to our collection that sort of touches on this subject. It's a print of a painting called *Incident on the Banana River*, and you donated the print to our collection. Can you talk a little bit about what that—how that painting came to be and what it depicts?

MA: Yeah. So my dad was good friends with Pete Conrad, and they were sort of yin and yang, I think. Pete was very extraverted and my dad much less so, but—so they were good friends. And they had a rare day off in—at Kennedy Space Center. And I don't know the reason they were there, but they had a little time off and they decided to go water skiing. And so they borrowed a boat from a friend of theirs that lived in the area.

And I think that—you know, Pete was driving and Dad was skiing. And my guess is that Pete was really keen on trying to provide as rough a skiing experience as possible. So here he is. He's driving and he's looking back, you know, at Dad, trying to, you know—probably trying to razz him or get him into trouble. And Pete ran the boat right on the ground of the shore of the Banana River. And so word got out about this with some of the other astronauts, and Wally Schirra had a picture taken and then had a painting commissioned to memorialize this embarrassing moment. You know, here is a couple of the world's best pilots, and they can't even keep a boat, you know, on the water. So that painting was—we have Wally to thank for that painting. And I just think it's a great story.

GN: And, of course, it's two Navy guys running their boat aground.

MA: Exactly, exactly.

GN: Imagine the Air Force guys had a pretty good laugh at that.

MA: Indeed.

00:25:37

[*Memories of Apollo 11*]

GN: And how did you feel about—you mentioned that you weren't really aware of the significance of your father's work until high school. How did you feel about the Space Program in general growing up while you were in the midst of it?

MA: Well, it was a very exciting time. I think for—no more or less for us than for the rest of the country. You know, I think that we were—we all shared the same excitement. And—that's—I don't have a great answer there.

GN: Did you have the same common childhood dream of wanting to be an astronaut when you grew up or was it something your dad did?

MA: I had a lot of dreams. To be an astronaut was certainly one of them. To play professional baseball. You know, I was a huge fan of Roberto Clemente. So I think like most kids, I had a lot of dreams and astronaut was certainly one of them.

GN: And so did you—do you recall where you were in—when the Apollo 11 Moon landing happened?

MA: Yeah, I was at home. So we had gone to Florida for the launch, but then we went back home and we were there listening, you know, and watching like everyone else.

GN: And were the other families gathered with you?

MA: Yeah, we had a pretty steady stream of folks visiting the house and, you know, sort of checking in on us and keeping us busy, I guess, so that we didn't worry so much. And we actually have a—sort of a big Apollo 11 poster that we had in the lobby, and everybody that came over to the house signed the poster. And I believe that's on loan to the Astronaut Hall of Fame.

GN: And how old were you when that Moon landing happened?

MA: I was six.

GN: You were six?

MA: Yeah.

GN: And how did it feel watching an astronaut, who was also your dad, making those first steps on the Moon?

MA: It was exciting. You know, but as a six-year-old, I was pretty sheltered from the dangers involved, so I didn't really appreciate the—you know, all the things that could go wrong. And that's good because I—as a six-year-old, I just—you know, I didn't need to know those things.

GN: And there's a wonderful photo, which I brought a copy if you need a refresher of your—you speaking with your father after the mission while he was still in quarantine. Do you recall where that photo was taken?

MA: I think the photo was taken at Ellington Air Force Base, which is in Houston. So the—you know, after they landed, they put on these suits, and they were picked up by the USS *Hornet*, and they went right into this quarantine. Sort of a big, silver trailer. And—but it was mobile, so they transported that back to Ellington Air Force Base. And that’s when I went to visit him.

GN: And who is with you in that photo?

MA: My mom, my brother, and also the Collins family and the Aldrin family were also there.

GN: And do you recall what you talked about with your dad?

MA: I think I probably said, “When are you coming home?” You know, “How are you and when are you coming home,” would be my guess.

GN: So what was life like in the Armstrong family after the Apollo 11 mission? Did it—did things change from before the mission to after, in terms of—sort of, you know, how your routines—given your father’s worldwide fame and the like?

MA: It was difficult to go out into public and, you know, sort of just have a quiet dinner or not be interrupted. And I think—and there were sort of—constantly press outside of our house. So I think eventually Mom and Dad felt that they should move. And I don’t know what all the factors were, but sort of trying to get—trying to find a sort of a normal, peaceful existence, I think, was a part of it.

GN: And you’ve mentioned your father was sort of an intellectual and introverted individual. And how did this sudden fame affect him?

MA: You know, I—he was—I don’t know if I want to say “introverted.” I might correct myself there. He was certainly less extroverted than Pete Conrad, but he was much—and quieter, I think, generally quieter. But I don’t know. Let me—let’s repeat that question. I—

GN: Okay. So how did your father’s sudden worldwide fame affect him? How did he handle that?

MA: I think fame introduced a number of new challenges that he wasn’t necessarily prepared for, but he had to figure out. So he set about trying to figure out how to adjust his life and the family life so that it was—you know, so that it would work. And I don’t know all the things that he thought about at that time, but I just know that he felt it was important to make adjustments to sort of meet these new challenges.

00:34:07

[Family move to Washington, D.C. and return to Cincinnati]

GN: And so not long after the Apollo missions, you moved to Washington, D.C. And what was it that prompted that move?

MA: That move was prompted by a job my dad took in Washington as a deputy administrator for NASA. But I think the political environment in Washington was different than the environments that he had come from, which—where decisions were made, you know, for engineering reasons and engineering reasons alone. And so I think he probably was a bit frustrated with—maybe with the pace of progress in Washington and felt that that just wasn't the right place for him.

GN: And so you ended up sort of returning to the homeland, of sorts.

MA: Yeah, so he decided at that point that he wanted to—my dad decided at that point that he wanted to teach. And so he looked for an opening in teaching aeronautics, and he found one at the University of Cincinnati. And that took us back to Ohio.

00:35:33

[Watching movies with Dad]

GN: So, okay, I've got one more question on Apollo. I'm noticing it's getting noisier and noisier.

MA: Yeah.

GN: And we'll—so this question comes from a member of the Museum's Space Committee, who knew your father and suggested that—what was it like to watch movies that had an aviation or a space theme or a scientific theme with your dad?

MA: Dad, through his love of flying and his military training, could instantly recognize any airplane at a glimpse. You know, just—and it was a blessing and a curse for him because when we'd watch any movie that had—that was showing aircraft flying and the—you know, they'd cut between scenes, and they'd show you the outside of the plane and the inside of the plane and the landing gear. And they were never the same airplane, and he would, you know—he felt compelled to point out all these inconsistencies and I think felt a little disgusted by how—by the filmmaker's attempt to fool him.

So he'd say, you know, "That's a Panther flying there." And then they'd show the cockpit, and he'd say, "That's not a Panther cockpit." And then they'd show the—you know, they'd show the airplane landing and he'd say—and they'd just show the landing gear, and he'd say, "Those are B-52 wheels. That's—" You know, and so he would just go on like this, and it was very difficult to watch any kind of—especially science fiction—any kind of

movie with him because, you know, he was—as I said, felt compelled to point out all the inconsistencies.

GN: Do you happen to recall—the one example I can think of that I recognize is *The Hunt for Red October*. Do—you happen to ever watch that with him? Because they're showing F-14s taking off, and then there's a whole thing about how there's an accident on the flight deck. And it shows this classic stock footage of—I think it's either a Panther or a Cougar impacting—[unintelligible 00:38:31], so...

MA: Yeah. So it's—I didn't see that with him, but that is exactly the kind of thing that—

00:38:21

[Mark's education and professional career]

GN: So for you, where did you end up going to school?

MA: I went to Stanford University. I studied physics and got a degree in physics, but I—this was in the early 80s, and the personal computer was just starting, and I was drawn in by computer science and just found it to be a fascinating hobby and spent a lot of time doing it on my own. And that ended up being my career.

GN: And so what was your first job out of college?

MA: My first job out of college was writing software, Macintosh software, on a consulting basis. And then I worked for several companies, including several startups, writing software for Macintosh computers.

GN: And that is how you began your career in tech?

MA: That's correct.

GN: And what are you doing currently in that?

MA: Yeah. I'm going to pass on that question.

GN: Okay.

MA: Because I'm not—I'm sort of retired from that, but—

GN: I think we need to update our bio statement on you.

MA: Yeah.

GN: So having grown up around the Space Program and around the Apollo Program and then moving into a career in technology, with a lot of the current space companies—the new space companies, as they're sometimes called—there's a lot of crossover between Silicon

Valley culture and practices into the space industry. And I'd be curious to get your thoughts on how the space—and what the benefits and risks might be to applying these software development processes and practices to space.

MA: You know, a lot of these software development processes have been designed to move faster to make mistakes early in the design process. So the earlier you make the mistakes, the less expensive those mistakes are. So it's very much of a rapid prototyping kind of an approach. Try a bunch of things, get some data back, and then winnow it down. And I think that's a very good design process, but it's one that is not as rigorous as a process where things are specified and designed all up front and then executed on.

So, you know, I think you can make any process work, and I definitely prefer some of the design methodologies that have come out of Silicon Valley and out of, you know, a lot of the startup technology companies. But there still has to be, at some point, a very rigorous integration quality assurance process, because all the big failures in the Space Program, if you listen to the sort of summarization of the findings, involve a failure to imagine a set of circumstances that actually occurred. Right? So it—so—that's—I guess that's all I got. [coughs] Excuse me.

GN: And for the oral history portion of this interview, we have one final question that we like to ask everyone, which is—we've heard what your father's favorite airplane is, but what's your favorite airplane?

MA: [laughter] Well, I've honestly always loved the SR-71. It's just a dramatic, amazing aircraft. So that'd be at the top of my list.

GN: All right. So thank you very much, Mark, for agreeing to talk with us for the Oral History Project. Is there anything else that we didn't cover that you'd like to discuss in this section of our interview before we move on?

MA: No.

00:43:34

[Becoming a Museum of Flight trustee and personal goals]

GN: Okay. All right. So just a couple additional questions about how you came to be involved here with The Museum of Flight. So when did you first become involved here at the Museum?

MA: It was 2012. I first became involved with The Museum of Flight in 2012. There was an astronaut reunion and a gala scheduled, and my father had intended to appear, but he had passed away shortly before that event. And so my brother and I came out in his stead to try

to fulfill his obligation. And I really—I liked the Museum, I liked the people that I met, and I felt like I might be able to add some value for the organization, so I offered to join.

GN: And—so what is it about The Museum of Flight that has drawn you to give your time and efforts here?

MA: The Museum—first of all, it's very successful at telling stories, and I think that—not just stories about the aircraft, but stories about the people behind the aircraft. And so they've done that exceptionally well. And they also have a very strong interest in education and STEM education. And I'm a big proponent of that, as was my father, so I'd like to carry on that part of his legacy.

GN: Thank you. [addressing someone else] Do you have any further questions for this portion of the interview?

CHRIS DAVENPORT: [off-camera] You're on the Board? Forgive me for—I don't know—

MA: Correct.

CD: What's your favorite thing about being on the Board? I mean, was there a favorite time that you had or was there a favorite thing that you liked to do as a Board member?

MA: What's my favorite thing about being on the Board? Hmm.

CD: Like, viscerally, what excites you about—because you live elsewhere, right? You live in—

MA: In Cincinnati, yeah.

CD: Cincinnati. You come out here, you're a Board member here. Being on a Board—we work with a lot of nonprofits. Being on the Board, that's work. That's responsibility. And so, you know, what touches you? What gets you excited about being on the Board?

MA: So as a Board member, I hope to be able to continue to be involved in the—in space exploration as it moves forward. And it's been, you know, it's been a frustrating—in my adult life, has been, I guess, disappointing and frustrating in what I thought would be happening with the Space Program and what has actually happened. Take—that's to take nothing away from the Shuttle. The Shuttle was fantastic, and the International Space Station is fantastic. But America's leadership position has been lost, I think. And I'm really thrilled that there are—you know, that there are individuals and commercial companies that have the means to kind of pick up where our country has faltered. And I'm really excited about the progress that's being made now by both SpaceX and Blue Origin, and I hope to stay involved with those pursuits.

GN: Okay, wonderful. Thank you very much.

00:48:02

[END OF INTERVIEW]