



Bevelyn Whitfield

I had the privilege of entering the U. S. Coast Guard in 1974 when the Coast Guard was under the Department of Transportation. Congress was threatening to withdraw funding for them unless they recruited more minorities and women. I was a single parent with a young son and I wanted to 1) make more money and, 2) show my young son some options to his life. Women were only allowed to enlist in four specialties – medical, food services, administration and ordering supplies. Although I was assigned to supply, I could not pass the exam because the jobs I was assigned to were always in administration. I

changed my rating to administration and learned to type.

I wound up serving over 21 years of active service and endured a lot of challenges as a result. I was asked to do something with my hair as the Coast Guard was not accustomed to women with natural hair but I was good at my job!!!

I was stationed in Galveston, TX; New Orleans, LA; Miami, FL twice and Washington, DC twice. I went to Guantamo Bay during the Haitian/Cuban Crisis. I earned the National Roy Wilkins NAACP Award for my efforts in Equal Opportunity. I attained the rank of E-7 and retired in 1998.