

International Work Gives White an Opportunity to See the World

On June 14, 1964, Nancy White embarked on a mission to enrich the cultural exchanges of information between the U.S. Census Bureau and the International community. For more than 30 years, she welcomed participants from other countries to the International Programs Center (IPC). As an administrative assistant for the chief of the Training Branch, it was White's responsibility to get the participants to the U.S. as well as ensure that they had life-changing experiences once they had arrived, both in and outside the bureau.

"We did everything from the time they left their countries until they returned home, and most of them stayed in the U.S. anywhere from six months to two years," White said. "This included coordinating travel itineraries, arranging housing and organizing activities. In general, we cared for them while they were here."

Funded by federal agencies, international organizations, the private sector and other governments, the IPC has been a part of the Census Bureau's Population Division for more than 50 years. The goal of the IPC was to conduct demographic and socioeconomic studies, and strengthen statistical development around the world.

"I made lasting friendships with so many people, and I always said I wanted to visit each one of them someday," White said. "While working for the IPC, I traveled to Turkey twice and to Egypt, Jordan and Rome on my own."



Nancy White receives service awards from Associate Director Howard Hogan and Director Bob Groves.

One of the most notable IPC project areas was the HIV/AIDS work — which began in 1987 — investigating the impact of AIDS mortality on population projections for less-developed countries. In 1997, IPC had just completed the Mozambique population and housing census months before the 1997-98 El Niño flood disaster. At the time, the census was the only source of cartographic and population data that existed at the village level.

"I still hear from many of [the IPC participants] at different times," White said.

Today, White is a group leader for the Demographic Call Center in the Data Integration Division. After 46 years of service, she has no plans to retire.

"People ask me all the time [when I will retire]," she said. "I just say, 'When the mood hits me, I'll go.'"

Briscoe's Long Career at NPC has gone from 'Heads Down' to 'Heads Up'

Conducting the decennial census — from planning to implementation — is a huge task that involves the entire U.S. Census Bureau. But there is no doubt that today's most innovative technology has streamlined the process and gave way to a more efficient and accurate census operation, says census veteran Nancy Briscoe.

During her 45 years of service, Briscoe has been a clerk, statistical clerk, lead clerk and supervisor. She started her career April 27, 1965, as a card punch operator with the Data Capture Branch at the National Processing Center. NPC, which has operated since 1958 in Jeffersonville, Ind., processes the Census Bureau's mail,

operates statistical and geographic data, supports the call center and captures data from the various census surveys including the decennial census. For Briscoe's first census operation in 1970, the data capture process was done manually.

"Forms were printed commercially, manually labeled with paper address labels, then each survey was sorted and filed in boxes with the appropriate alpha number until all questionnaires for that company were assembled," Briscoe said. "It is a big difference from doing 'key from paper' in the early days to the 'key from image' operations of today."



Nancy Briscoe has been with the Census Bureau since 1965.

Puzzle Map Inspires Whitaker on the Job and in Life

As a small child more than 60 years ago, George Whitaker's grandmother gave him a U.S. puzzle map. Those 48 states would inspire him on a lifelong journey.

"I was able to travel to all but one or two states when my grandmother passed away at the age of 104," Whitaker said. "The 50th state I finally stepped foot in was Oklahoma in February 2004."

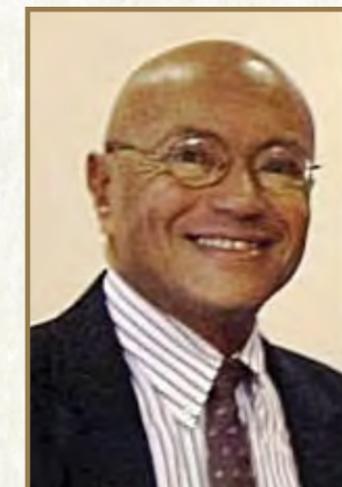
But one of Whitaker's greatest adventures was landing a career with the leading source of data about the nation's people and economy, and the home of geography, the U.S. Census Bureau. On Feb. 2, 1969, he started as a clerk for the Los Angeles Regional Census Office. Whitaker and another employee were hired for six months to do follow-up calls for the Annual Retail Trade Survey. However, he ended up taking on both positions.

"Two of us were hired but the second person became ill and could not work," Whitaker said. "So I completed the work on my own, which resulted in [the former Los Angeles assistant regional director] being impressed enough to hire me full time."

After a few months, he was promoted to supervisor before being transferred to the Seattle Regional Office in 1975. Today, he is one of three coordinators for the Seattle region. After 45 years of service, Whitaker has no immediate plans to retire.

"I still find the work very interesting and rewarding," the 69-year-old said. "I have always had an interest in statistical data, both economic and demographic, and of course geography."

It's no surprise that after all of these years Whitaker still remembers that puzzle map. Maps are a remarkable source of information, and perusing a diagram of inhabited places gives one a sense of connection to our cities, states and the world. Maps help navigate the journey to knowledge and those experiences that we all seek.



George Whitaker (Seattle RO), who has seen all 50 states, has been with the Census Bureau since 1969.

"I have also traveled to Japan, China and Europe several dozen times making friends whom I still keep in touch with," he said.

When Whitaker does retire, he will continue to scan the terrain using a simple map to bring the world to his fingertips. His journey will take him to the Palm Springs, Calif., area where he has a house and a small group of friends. But most importantly, Whitaker will also take the trek home to spend more time with his family.

"I look forward to spending more time with family, especially my mother, who at the age of 88 takes care of my disabled brother," Whitaker said. "She is a great human being and I enjoy my time with her very much."

The traditional "heads-down" keying from paper involved human key operators like Briscoe sitting in front of a computer terminal and looking down at a form placed on a rack. Briscoe read the data placed on the form by the respondent and manually keyed this data into the computer using a key-from-paper software package. A major problem with capturing data from forms filled out by respondents was measuring the accuracy and efficiency of the system. This is true whether traditional "heads-down" keying from paper or "heads-up" keying from image.

"It took a complete bay to perform this operation," Briscoe said.

Today, Briscoe is a supervisory operations specialist for NPC's Statistical Methods and Quality Branch, which maintains sampling frame for surveys/programs. And she has many relatives as co-workers.

Briscoe has a sister-in-law, Paula Briscoe, who has worked in the Geography Division for 20 years as a cartographic technician; a niece, Denise Liebert, who has worked for six years as a cartographic technician; a nephew, Dave Briscoe, who has worked in the Program Management Services Branch for 10 months as a scheduler; a first cousin, Kenneth Sieg, who has worked in the Document Services Branch for 22 years as a mail processing equipment operator; Sieg's wife, Leslie, has worked in the Decennial Logistics Branch for 24 years as a supply technician; and a second cousin, Sarah Byerley, who has worked in Fiscal Services for three years as a management assistant.

"The work and the people have changed dramatically, but I would not want to have worked anywhere else," Briscoe said. "I thoroughly enjoyed working with the many employees and managers at NPC, and I have met many people who are now my friends for a lifetime."