

EIDRIGE COOK

1-10-06

BORN IN MISSISSIPPI - TEACHER
TAUGHT ENGLISH THERE

CAME TO GM FOR THE MONEY 25 YRS OLD
STARTED IN MAY OF 1963 BUT ACTUALLY HIRED IN FULLTIME GS
STARTED ON THE ASSEMBLY LINE AT \$2.35 AN HOUR,
THERE WAS ONLY ONE BLACK SUPERVISOR AT THAT TIME
NO ASIAN OR MEXICANS VERY FEW MINORITIES ON
THE FLOOR AT THAT TIME.

WORKED IN THE PAINT DEPT IN GS IN THE WET SAND
AREA AND FOUND OUT HE LIKED THE TRIM AREA BETTER
EXPERIENCED SOME RACIAL JOKES BUT BEING FROM THE
SOUTH HE FELT HE WAS USED TO IT AND OVERLOOKED
HE KNEW WHAT HE WAS IN THERE FOR. WORKED FOR
3 YEARS DOING BODY WIRE. THEN WENT ON TO BE
A TIME KEEPER AND RELIEVE JOB. ALSO WAS A SUPERVISOR
IN THAT AREA SO HE FELT THAT HELPED UNDERSTAND
WORK AND WHAT THE PEOPLE HAD TO DO. WAS IN

THE 1970 STRIKE. WAS READY TO GO ON WELFARE
BECAUSE HE HAD KIDS TO FEED, IT WAS ROUGH.
BECAME A SUPERVISOR IN 1971, WHEN HE APPLIED
FOR SUPERVISION. THEY TOLD HIM HE ~~COULDN'T~~ DIDN'T
PASS THE TEST. HE FOUND THAT ODD EVEN THOUGH
HE HAD A DEGREE IN BUSINESS + EDUCATION. IT WASN'T
GOOD ENOUGH. FELT MAYBE IT WAS HIS COLOR OR RACE.
SO HE KEPT WORKING ON THE LINE. THEN IN
1971 THEY PASSED A LAW AND THEY CHECKED HIS
RECORDS AND FOUND OUT HE HAD APPLIED

FOR SUPERVISION AND THEN THEY FORCED HIM ON IT. EVEN THOUGH HE TOLD HIM HE DIDN'T WANT IT. PROBLEMS WITH SOME EMPLOYEE'S WERE THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE THEIR CHECK FROM HIM BECAUSE HE WAS BLACK. HE HAD TO MAIL SOME THEIR CHECKS. THEY PUT ON SEVERAL MINORITIES AFTER THAT TIME.

HE PUT 37 1/2 YRS. IN G.M. 31 AS A SUPERVISOR FELT BEING A BLACK SUPERVISOR HE FELT HE COULD BE MORE SENSITIVE TO PEOPLE NEEDS. KNEW THAT PEOPLE HAD A LIFE OUTSIDE THE PLANT. IN THE 80'S THERE WERE MORE YOUNGER PEOPLE THAT WORKED IN THE PLANT AND FELT THAT THESE YOUNGER WORKERS DID NOT APPRECIATE THEIR JOBS AND DIDN'T WANT TO WORK AS MUCH. BUT HE FELT HE DIDN'T HAVE ANY POWER AS A SUPERVISOR TO WEED THE BAD ONES OUT. FELT THAT WHEN MESC TOOK OVER THE HIRING THAT QUALITY OF PEOPLE WERE AS NOT AS GOOD AS WHEN HIRING FROM WITHIN THE PLANT (FAMILY MEMBERS) THEY HAD SOME GOOD PROGRAMS TO HELP EMPLOYEE'S THAT HAD DRINKING OR PROBLEMS WITH DRUGS BUT SOME WOULD NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT AND HE WOULD HAVE TO DISCIPLINE THEM OR FIRE THEM.

SPENT HIS LUNCHES IN THE SALARY DINING ROOM BUT NEVER THOUGHT HAVING A SEPARATE DINING ROOM FOR SALARY, HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER SUPERVISORS AND DIDNT FEEL ANY PROBLEMS BECAUSE HE WAS BLACK. A JIM ZUBKUS WAS HIS FAVORITE PLANT MANAGER BECAUSE HE FELT HE WAS A REAL PEOPLE PERSON. VINYL TOP AREA WAS ONE OF HIS FAVORITE AREA'S TO SUPERVISE. NIGHT SHIFT WAS HARDER TO MANAGE ON BECAUSE OF YOUNGER EMPLOYEES. BUT IF YOU TREAT ALL EMPLOYEE'S GOOD AND THAT HE WAS THERE FOR THEM IT WOULD WORK OUT. HAD ONE EMPLOYEE BROUGHT A GUN IN AND THREATENED him but he didnt HAVE THE GUY FIRED.

Cookie^{Also} HAD A DAUGHTER THAT ALSO WORKED IN THE PLANT. HE ENJOYED ALL THE DINNERS THAT THEY HAD IN THE PLANTS IN THE AREAS THAT HE WORKED IN. EVEN COOKED SOME ROAST IN THE PAINT OVENS. HE THINKS LANSING WILL ALWAYS BE KNOWN AS THE CAPITAL OF QUALITY BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE. HE WALKED TO WORK WHEN HE FIRST HIRED IN. HATED TO SEE FISHER BODY CLOSE BUT KNOWS THE PEOPLE WILL GO TO THE DELTA PLANT AND CARRY ON AS BEING THE BEST IN GM. HE DIDNT MIND PEOPLE PLAYING THE CHECK POOLS OR FOOTBALL POOLS EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A FORM OF GAMBLING AND AGAINST PLANT RULES. SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY.

FELT IT REALLY HELPED WHEN THEY GOT THE EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN SETTING UP THE JOBS. IT HELPED WITH QUALITY AND TO RUN THINGS SMOOTHER. HE FEELS THEY SHOULD ALLOW THE EMPLOYEES TO HAVE RADIOS AT THE NEW PLANT. IF YOU KEEP EMPLOYEES HAPPY THEY WILL DO A GOOD JOB. TRIED TO LET HIS SUPERVISOR KNOW THAT JOBS THAT WERE NOT ENGINEERED RIGHT WOULD NEED TO BE APPRESSED IF IT WAS HURTING THE EMPLOYEES. FELT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE ENGINEERS AND EMPLOYEES WORKING CLOSER TOGETHER ON SETTING UP THE JOBS. HE ENJOYES WORKING WITH HIS CHURCH IN RETIREMENT. LIKES TO FISH AND HUNT. BOTHERS HIM THAT GM IS HAVING TROUBLE. NO OTHER COMPANY TREATS ITS EMPLOYEES AS GOOD AS GM. BUT THE EMPLOYEES DESERVE IT. THEY WORK HARD.