

KSC Engineer Designs Talking Aid for Deaf

A potential solution to a problem encountered by deaf persons resulted from a concept provided by KSC engineer Clyde Pittman in response to a public sector problem identified by NASA's Technology Utilization Program.

A common problem encountered by deaf persons in oral communication with persons with normal hearing is voice level. Unable to hear his own voice the deaf person frequently speaks too loudly, or unintelligibly low.

NEED FOR SOLUTION

Need for a solution was the subject of a problem statement circulated by TU's Biomedical Applications Team at Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas, a NASA contractor involved in identifying problems that may be solved through application of space technology and making solutions available for the benefit of mankind.

Receiving the problem statement, the KSC TU office circulated it to engineering areas involved in communications, among them Design Engineering's Communications Branch, where chief Albert Kempson assigned a study of the problem to Pittman.

Pittman's concept provided for a battery operated wristwatch-type device containing microphone, amplifier, potentiometer

and meter. Observing the meter as he speaks to others, the deaf person would maintain voice level within calibrated ranges. The solution included identification of components and a schematic.

IDEA SUBMITTED

Submitted by Kempson to the KSC TU office, the concept was forwarded to Southwest Research for review by the biomedical team. So interested was the team in the concept that a prototype device will be fabricated and tested in communications situations involving the deaf.

"We feel that Mr. Pittman's suggestions will be of particular help in solving the problem. We will keep in touch with him from time to time on guidance," wrote Dr. David F. Cluelasure, Southwest's Biomedical Applications Program project manager.

Born in Yokuska, Japan, Pittman has resided in Brevard County since 1954.

SCHOOLING

A graduate of Titusville High School, he attended the University of Florida where he received a BS degree in Electrical Engineering. As an undergraduate at Florida he was a member of the University's engineering staff, involved in pollution control experiments and theoretical physics research under direction of physics and aeronomy head Dr. Alex E. S. Green.