

## Camilla Canty (7/9/23)

I worked at the Labs from 1979 until 1991, first in Finance, then as Project Scheduler for the ACTS (Advanced Communications Technology Satellite) program. I looked at the Wikipedia entry for COMSAT and didn't see any mention of the ACTS Program. Here's a link to an article about the program: <https://ohioopen.library.ohio.edu/spacejournal/vol1/iss2/5/>.

And here's a paragraph from that article giving a program summary, and listing the major players:

“ACTS is an in-orbit, advanced communication satellite test bed, bringing together industry, government, and academia in a wide range of technology, propagation, and user application investigations. NASA's Lewis Research Center (LeRC) awarded the ACTS contract in August of 1984 to an industry team consisting of:

- Lockheed Martin (then RCA), East Windsor, New Jersey - for system integration and the spacecraft bus
- TRW, Redondo Beach, California - for the spacecraft communication payload
- COMSAT Laboratories, Clarksburg, Maryland - for the network control and master ground facility
- Motorola, Chandler, Arizona - for the baseband processor
- EMS Technologies (formerly called Electromagnetic Sciences), Norcross, Georgia - for the spot beam forming networks.”

ACTS was a high-profile, important program at the Labs at the time.



Management encouraged team activities other than technical work. The after-hours co-ed softball games every spring at COMSAT Labs were popular and well attended.

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Here are some of my recollections from the mid- to late-1980s at the Labs:

The ACTS Program was ground-breaking for the Labs in ways other than the technical component. After obtaining an MBA in Corporate Finance, I became a member of the Finance Department at the Labs. When the ACTS Request for Proposal came along, I was put in charge of preparing the pricing for the proposal. We were required to use an approach that was brand new to Labs management – namely, a Work Breakdown Structure. Furthermore, the proposal pricing took place before off-the-shelf software packages were available. It was a very labor-intensive exercise! I also remember that the Labs only had one large IBM mainframe computer at that time, and it was in the wing at the opposite end of the building from me. I worked in Wing 0, so I got a lot of exercise going to the opposite end of the building to pick up my printouts.

The ACTS Program also required the Labs to use a heretofore unfamiliar rigorous approach to developing, tracking, and reporting the cost and schedule performance once the contract was underway. The requirement was called (at that time) C/SCSC, which stood for Cost/Schedule Control Systems Criteria. Today we call it Earned Value Management (EVM). The ACTS program was required to have an Earned Value Management system that could be “certified” by the government. Upon contract award, I left the Finance Department and joined the ACTS Program Management Office as Project Scheduler. It was my responsibility to develop a scheduling system, including processes and procedures, that could be officially certified. I had a co-worker, Hugh Hutchens, who was developing the same approach on the cost component of the contract. We succeeded in our development efforts, and our EVM system for the ACTS Program was certified.

As for the co-ed softball league at the Labs, I’ve attached a photo of the team that I was on. You can see that the word “co-ed” is not the operative word here. That’s me in the front row—the only woman on the team. However, in later years, women gradually joined all the teams. I don’t remember how many teams there were, but it was a very popular activity. The league had a double-elimination tournament at the end of each season, along with well-attended cookouts. As you probably recall, the softball fields were on the less populated end of the campus.

