



United States Merit Systems Protection Board

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MSPB BIDS FAREWELL TO CHAIRMAN NEIL A.G. McPHIE



Vice Chairman Mary M. Rose and Chairman Neil A.G. McPhie

On October 29, 2009, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) staff and guests assembled in the headquarters offices to bid farewell to Chairman Neil A.G. McPhie. Mr. McPhie served as the seventh Chairman of MSPB since its creation in 1979. Chairman McPhie was sworn in as a Board Member on April 23, 2003. He served as Acting Chairman until November 21, 2004 at which time he was confirmed by Congress as Chairman.

In her comments, Vice Chairman Mary M. Rose, whose appointment to the Board continues until March 2011, mentioned a number of MSPB's accomplishments during Chairman McPhie's tenure. She stated that when Mr. McPhie began his term as Chairman in 2003, a typical MSPB appellant could expect to wait about 295 days for the Board to issue a decision on their petition for review. At that time, the average processing time for a pending case was about 164 days and MSPB headquarters had a backlog of approximately 1,100 pending cases. In the six years under Chairman McPhie's leadership, MSPB has reduced the number of processing days over 60%. Appellants before MSPB may now expect to receive decisions within 100 days. The average pending age of petitions for review cases before the Board has been reduced from 164 days to approximately 57 days.

The reduction in average processing time also is reflected in initial appeals heard in MSPB Regional and Field offices. In FY 2003, MSPB reported that the average Regional or Field office processing time was about 94 days. Currently, MSPB Regional and Field offices are issuing initial decisions in about 82 days.

In his remarks, Chairman McPhie mentioned that one of the accomplishments about which he was most proud is the MSPB Mediation Appeals Program (MAP) -- a nationwide program offering mediation services to parties who file appeals with MSPB -- which he

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established as a permanent program in November 2004. This program, offered to appellants as an alternative to the adjudication process, has proven to be a successful alternative to resolve Federal employee appeals.

Chairman McPhie also announced that, *“For the first time in the history of the MSPB, the incoming, new Chairman will have a zero number of overage cases. We have eliminated the backlog.”*

Chairman McPhie mentioned how gratifying it was to host a number of foreign dignitaries, from Thailand, Ukraine, Taiwan, and other countries, who have visited the MSPB to learn how to establish merit systems in their own governments. Mr. McPhie told MSPB employees, *“You should be proud that we, as the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, receive world-wide recognition as an example to be studied and emulated. You are helping export the merit principles.”*

Chairman McPhie expressed his pride that during his tenure with MSPB, the agency has consistently been rated as one of the best places to work in the Federal government. (The *Best Places to Work* rankings are produced by the Partnership for Public Service and American University's Institute for the Study of Public Policy Implementation. In ratings released in 2007, MSPB was ranked second.)

The MSPB is an independent, quasi-judicial agency with responsibility for deciding Federal employee appeals from personnel actions taken against them and for protecting the integrity of the civil service and other Federal merit systems. The MSPB also conducts studies of the civil service and other merit systems and reviews significant actions of the Office of Personnel Management.