

# Q & A for NHC



## CHRISTOPHER BURR

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**When I arrived here several years ago, you were the branch chief of TAFB.**

That's right, I had accepted that position back in the spring of 1998 and I held it for the next 11 years.

**That has to be some kind of record there.**

Most of my predecessors held it for three to five years, so it probably is. It was a good job and it was challenging. I was able to stay in operations, working occasional operational shifts about a quarter of the time during that 11 year span.

**You must have seen some big changes during that time.**

I first arrived at the National Hurricane Center in the summer of 1988, just before Hurricane Gilbert moved through the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. We were still using AFOS (Automation of Field Operations and Services) to type in our products by hand with no spell check. There were still satellite pictures from GOES-East and GOES-West. The surface map was plotted on a computer, but we had to analyze the map in pencil. We did have the McIDAS system to display and animate geostationary

satellite imagery on a large monitor. That was a big help to be able use the Dvorak technique to help locate the position of the storm and to get an estimate of its intensity.

**How did you get interested in weather?**

It was either my sophomore or junior year in high school. I grew up in Connecticut, and really did not have much interest in the tropics at that time, but I always liked science and was drawn to the weather. I do recall in the late '70s getting the daily weather map series from the National Weather Service. When I applied for college, I wanted to stay in New England or the mid Atlantic States areas. I ended up at the State University of New York College of Oneonta in upstate New York. I went there for four years and got my meteorology degree in 1983. I went immediately into the Masters of Meteorology program at the University of Maryland in College Park and graduated in 1986.

**How did you join NOAA?**

During my last few months as a graduate student, I worked at NOAA's Office of Atmospheric Research Air Resources Laboratory. I was a full time term employee for a little more than a year before signing up with National Weather Service headquarters in Silver Spring (Maryland). I was there for a little under a year and knew at the time that having an administrative job at headquarters was not what I wanted to do. I saw a notice that three positions were open at the National Hurricane Center. I applied for all three, and got the one at the Tropical Satellite and Analysis Center, the predecessor to what is now TAFB. I worked as a forecaster for 10 years (1988 to 1998) and became its branch chief.

**You then became NHC's Executive Officer?**

In early 2009, I became the XO where my duties include the strategic, administrative, and scientific planning and budgeting for the office. I have always had an interest in the strategic planning and budgeting process and I interact with my counterparts in NOAA, NWS, and NCEP as needed.

**What's the best part of the job?**

The occasional liaison I have with Legislative Affairs and Public Affairs and working occasional shifts in TAFB.

**What do you do in real life?**

I have always been an active exerciser. I am at the gym several times a week, and try to get out and run four times a week as well. I work on my golf handicap, too. I also enjoy international travel.

**Send comments to: [nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov](mailto:nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov)**