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What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
I was on campus during the infamous Pail and Shovel Party, when a gigantic replica of the Statue of Liberty’s head and torch were created on Lake Mendota, as well a flock of thousands of pink plastic flamingos were put on Bascom Hill. As an engineering student, these creative and fun acts provided a bit of levity.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
Timing and having great mentors. Being “Wisconsin stubborn” (I believe people from Wisconsin tend to be hardy people, with a strong work ethic and would rather get something done than complain) has served me well in my career in the aerospace industry, a predominantly male driven industry. Also, maintaining a positive attitude, and having optimism about the future have been critical to my success.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
I was a bit older than the other students, which means I spent most of my time studying. Some of my fondest memories are at Memorial Union, a space that offered entertainment and relaxation.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
I am involved in the Society of Satellite Professionals International, which is a networking organization for the industry. This group gives awards to the future leaders within the industry, and I continue to be impressed and excited about these leaders. The creativity and innovation coming from early career engineers, especially aerospace and space exploration, is inspiring.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
Goat farming. I would love to have a herd of goats, and then make hand crafted goat cheese to sell at my local farmers’ market.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
Professor Vernon, who was my electromagnetic fields and waves professor. I was very much intrigued by the math, and knew I had found my engineering niche. He introduced me and deepened my knowledge and affinity of the field, and I later took my first job building satellites. This technology was considered old at that time, but the “old technology” was still being used and would sustain the space industry even to today. He truly was an excellent professor and educator.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
Besides my children, I am proud that I am able to advise and give back to other women, who are early in their careers, to help them reach their full potential. It is tough being a female engineer, and it’s transformational when there is encouragement from others.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
Be a student and think about your future. Whether you are interested in pursuing a career in industry or academia, you can achieve whatever you want. Networking is critical. You have to participate, meet people, and reach out.