James Pertzborn  
Retired  
IBM

What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
The beauty of the campus. I became an avid biker and enjoyed riding along the lakes and throughout campus. Football games at Camp Randall, hockey games at the Coliseum, Badger fans singing “Varsity.”

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
An optimistic outlook, persistence and willingness to work hard in taking on challenging/tough assignments. The ability to perform as part of a team, the power of diversity and teamwork. Whether you think you can or you can’t, you’re probably right.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
The diversity of backgrounds, interests and aspirations of the many fellow students/friends across the campus I met. It was a high time of social unrest with the Vietnam war, etc. The dialogue opened my mind to a much larger world view.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
The opportunities are limitless with the rapid advances in technology and the ability to apply these technologies to making many aspects of our daily lives better. When I graduated, Biomedical engineering was in it’s infancy, to see where it is today and what’s on the horizon impacting people’s quality of life is truly exciting.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
Family, international travels and Badger sports.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
Professor Allan Scidmore. Not only was he a great teacher, he provided subtle guidance/encouragement when contemplating what lies ahead after graduation.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
Mentoring and leading teams, having an impact not only on technological/product advancements, but also the growth of individuals, the next generation.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
When deciding where to apply your engineering talent/skills, pursue a field for which you are passionate and your contributions provide great personal satisfaction. Never stop learning, your achievements at UW are an entry point to a career. You have many years of rapidly changing technological advancements in front of you.