Richard Schwartz
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What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
I met my wife Mary Jo on campus. Many of my favorite moments were spent with her. I specifically remember walks on Lake Mendota.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
My wife Mary Jo has supported everything I did, from school onwards.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
I was very interested in athletics in high school. At Madison I played on the basketball freshman team. After first semester, I got my grades while sitting in the locker room. The varsity coach came into freshman locker room (which was unusual) and asked for Richard Schwartz. The coach then simply shook his head and walked out. After this moment, I moved my concentration from athletics to academics.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
Engineering has the ability to change the world. We can find answers to the huge energy and food problems facing the world. It is an extremely satisfying and life changing area of study.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
I have 8 kids, 21 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. My passion is to watch them grow.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
Two professors specifically from my time at UW-Madison: Professor Peterson, the department Chair, and Professor Skyles, my academic advisor. These professors got me interested in solid state devices. This was during the time after the invention of the transistor. I was able to switch out normal curriculum classes with thermodynamics and other extra math and physics courses, which were more relevant over the course of my career.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
I am proud of having been part of solar energy throughout its development. I watched it go from being a toy to supplying real power and being used in real-life applications.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?