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What is your favorite Madison/campus memory?
Walking along the lakeshore in the summers, walking on the frozen lake in the winters, hanging out at coffee shops on the State Street discussing the brain, the mind, and artificial intelligence, and every topic under the sun.

What has helped you achieve success in your career?
Parents who instilled a love of learning, teachers who nurtured it, and excellent mentors who opened for me a window to the world through the computational lens, and set me on a path to develop and use computational abstractions to understand aspects of minds, brains, and life.

Outside of class, what experiences did you find most meaningful?
Informal interactions with faculty and students with diverse backgrounds and expertise from computer science, neuroscience, psychology, mathematics, philosophy, engineering that helped inform and influence my work.

What excites you about the future of Engineering?
The possibilities offered by artificial intelligence, robotics, and data sciences to address major societal challenges such as health, education, food, energy, environment, sustainable development, and even social justice.

Besides engineering, do you have another passion you have pursued or would have liked to pursue given the time?
Science policy, Reading about a wide range of topics; Travel; and someday, writing novels.

Who was an influential peer/professor from your time at UW-Madison?
Many UW-Madison faculty, especially, Leonard Uhr (Computer Science), my PhD mentor; Charles Dyer (Computer Science), who introduced me to Artificial Intelligence; Jude Shavlik (Computer Science), who taught me the importance of rigorous empirical evaluations of machine learning algorithms; Gregg Oden (Psychology), who introduced me to Cognitive Science; Tony Stretton (Biology) who introduced me to Neuroscience; Josh Chover (Mathematics), who taught me Mathematical Biology; and Bill Birkemeier (Electrical and Computer Engineering) who taught me Stochastic Processes.

What are you most proud of in life? What is your greatest achievement?
The many graduate students who I have had the good fortune to mentor.

What would be your advice to current students? What do you wish you had known?
Pursue your passion. Ask questions. Don’t be afraid to get into new areas. Scientific problems don’t nicely fit within disciplinary boundaries. If you are afraid of being wrong, you can’t be original or creative. Don’t ever give up. You have one life to live. Make it count. Have fun along the way.