What do you do in the EED?

I’m a Professor of Practice and serve as the director of the Fundamentals of Engineering for Honors program, which I also teach both semesters. I’ve been teaching now for 20 years.

Favorite thing about working in the EED?

Working with students. In any given semester, I’ve got 70 “academic sons and daughters”. I get to work with all the Honors students and get to work with some of the best TAs that any unit on campus could possibly have. The TAs are dedicated, passionate, committed to the program, really bright, and take very little of my time in terms of direction and supervision so I don’t have to micromanage their paths.

On bringing people together

In the 20 years I’ve been teaching, I’ve worked with 500 TAs. Out of that group, there are 11 married couples and two more are engaged. I think when you bring together people that have similar motivations and interests you’re gonna find some matches.

I was asked to officiate one of these weddings. I’m not an ordained minister, so I got my pastor to come with me and officiate, and I served as the co-officiant. It took place on the east side of the Thompson Library on a Saturday afternoon and in attendance was the former president of the university, Gordon Gee.

What did you do before coming to the EED?

In my previous life, I was a researcher at the Aerospace Research Center. I started working at the ARC after I graduated with my Master’s in 1974. I started serving as the principle investigator (PI) on my own projects in the 1980s. Most of my research projects were industry sponsored so my name isn’t widely published in archived journals. I researched predominately for engine manufacturers, like GE aviation, working on aerodynamic and aeroacoustics problems around the world.
In 2006 and 2009 I served as a resident director for a London study abroad program. It was a 5 credit course for students to go to London for 9 days over winter break. I had the opportunity to tour a bunch of fun places. I always emphasized engineering no matter what we were looking at. There are a lot of questions that I could ask when touring such as, “How does this work?”, “How was it made?”, “What problem does it solve?”, “Are there other solutions?”, and “What’s the historical architectural context?” I liked to pick places, like the Tower Bridge, that demonstrated what we’d already discussed and ask some of those questions.

As a hobby, I’ve pursued stage lighting. I’ve worked in every auditorium on campus at some point and would probably be doing theatrical stage listing if I wasn’t an engineer. I was here when they tore down the original University Hall, which was the first building at Ohio State – I have 2 bricks from the building.

**What notable memories do you have as a student at OSU?**

When I attended OSU I lived in the 1990 section of the stadium on the west side. I had the Stadium scholarship, so I worked in the stadium for reduced room and board. I was here in the spring term of 1970 when the university was closed for 2 weeks after riots. The riots were less about Vietnam and more about underrepresented student rights. I remember being chased across the Oval and breathing in tear gas on and off for about a week. I spent the night of the World Premier in jail. I might have been involved in tearing down the goalposts and planting them in the statehouse lawn…but we brought them back!

**On OSU football**

I’ve had season football tickets for 50 years! I still have my ticket from the Jan 1, 1969 football game between #1 Ohio State and #2 USC. OJ Simpson was the running back for USC at the time. He lost.

**You’ve been at Ohio State since 1968. Could you share some fun facts you’ve picked up during that time?**

Mirror Lake originally got its water from a nearby spring, which made it kinda swampy and stinky. In 1892 the city put a huge storm sewer line down high street, which made Mirror Lake completely dry up, until the city restored the water to the lake in 1894. The lake later dried up until the 1930s after all of the nearby construction. After that period, the lake was filled by well water from the Olentangy River and now it’s filled by city water. It takes 50k gallons a day of water to keep it filled. When it opens back up they’ll be able to turn the water off and drain it in 60 mins!

Mendenhall glacier in Alaska was named after Dr. Mendenhall. It’s one of the only three places in the world where you can stand on a glacier in a temperate rain forest and look at the ocean.

Bolz Hall was one of the first engineering buildings built at OSU, opening in January 1960. Hitchcock was built later in the mid-60s.