PittGreensburg

Alumni Spotlight — The 1980's

Alumni Spotlight: Jeff Bigi '89

Jeff Bigi graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 1989. He studied applied mathematics and computer science. Read more about his life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was … the campus, and the professors were recommended by a very good friend and Pitt-Greensburg alum. Also, since I am from the area, Pitt-Greensburg afforded me the opportunity to work the night shift at UPS New Stanton while completing my degree.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg … was the size of the campus—smaller than expected with only a couple of buildings, when I started in the summer of 1986. Although small, this was the environment I was looking for, since I was starting my post-secondary education eight years after high school.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was … the mentoring, support, and one-on-one time the professors offered and provided during my first year at Pitt-Greensburg. Since I took a non-traditional path to college, getting back into a classroom and learning environment were key to keeping a forward focus while working to get my degree.

The faculty members who had the greatest influence on me were … Dr. Mary Grace O'Donnell, Dr. Estela Llinas, and Dr. Ted Zaleskiewicz. They devised inspiring lectures for the difficult subjects of mathematics and physics. Their ability to promote discussion and teach and illustrate with real world examples showed students application along with a work ethic that had you go further and make a difference. A couple years ago, I was sorry to hear of the passing of Dr. "Z". Over the past 27 years, I have used the teaching disciplines and sayings of all three. I know how to work on and provide successful "recipes" or drive change. After all, "failure to change is a measure of a small mind." May God bless, and rest in peace, Dr. Z.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I … was afforded a UPS management opportunity in the industrial engineering department. I have parlayed my Pitt-Greensburg mathematics degree into a 30-year

career with UPS. Over these years, my Pitt-Greensburg experience was used to support engineering opportunities for sort facilities, ground transportation networks, and air division networks.

My reason for staying connected to the University is … at a minimum, to always remember to give back and support Pitt-Greensburg's continuing effort to educate, mentor, and move forward the next generation of professionals who will change the world.

In my spare time, I … catch up on home projects. Also, I spend quality time with my wife Anna Marie and our two daughters, Cassandra and Nicole.

Alumni Spotlight: Ronna (Sarsfield) Colland ’87

What started out as a desire to stay close to home while studying accounting has come full circle for Ronna (Sarsfield) Colland ’87. A work-study student in the business office at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg, Colland completed a BS in management then returned to campus 10 years later as its director of business affairs. She recalled declaring in her interview that it was her “dream job” and upon being hired said it was like “coming home.” That was 17 years ago.

A commuter student, Colland was very active on campus with the Student Government Association (SGA) and made many friends with other work-study students, besides the study groups with other business management and accounting students. She said she enjoyed all her classes but remembered Professor Bob Pratt doing a lot with the students, including a business honor society, and Dr. Jim DeFloria for his willingness to explain and guide students in their accounting study.

Colland reminisced how she was included in the 200th anniversary Pitt celebration at the Greensburg Country Club due to her student involvement. And, there was a favorite memory in the Student Union. “It was the middle of winter … they cleared out the furniture, SGA put sand in McKenna Hall, and we had a beach party. That was a lot of fun!” Colland added, “I’m not sure how they got that past administration?”
Besides taking a couple summer classes on the Oakland campus, Colland completed her degree

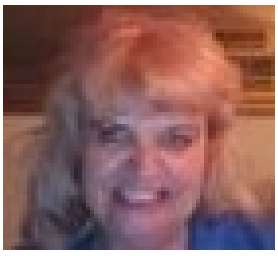
requirements at Pitt-Greensburg and finished a semester early just missing the start of Pitt-Greensburg conferring degrees.

A Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Colland said her accounting courses at Pitt-Greensburg gave her the required educational credits to take the CPA exam and her work-study experience provided "really great skills" and practical training.

During her senior year, Colland gave up her work-study job because of a financial aid situation, "That's probably why I give to the Staff Association's Resource Fund. … It's directed toward helping students' expenses." She said, "There were people that I worked with in the Business Office at that time who had an impact on me. Most faculty and staff here sincerely care about the students and want them to succeed. That is, foremost, Pitt-Greensburg."

In addition to participating in the internal giving campaign, Colland concerns herself and her staff with helping the students understand their bills and what they need to do to cover their tuition. "We try to steer them in the right direction, because we want them to succeed and continue in their studies."

Outside of work, Colland keeps busy with her husband, daughter—whom she hopes will someday be a Pitt alum, and volunteer work. "I would like alumni to come back and visit … it's a dynamic place. It's a special place."



Alumni Spotlight: Roxanne Liebermann '87

Roxanne Liebermann, CISSP-ISSEP, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 1987 with a BS in Applied Mathematics and a minor in Computer Science. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was … the location and not having to drive to Pittsburgh since I was a night student.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg … that the campus was small, there was plenty of parking, and the classes were personable. Since 1987, the campus has really grown.

My favorite thing/fondest memory as a student was … going to the computer lab till 11 p.m. most nights. We did not have PCs yet. I used a keypunch machine to type my FORTRAN code and a dumb terminal for COBOL code. Now, I do cloud computing.

The faculty member who had the greatest influence on me was … Dr. Mary Grace O'Donnell. She taught all my calculus courses. We still exchange Christmas cards. She prepared me for my first job at the U.S. Census Bureau in Washington, D.C.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I … accepted a computer programmer job at the U.S. Census Bureau. I worked there for 10 years on economic indicator surveys. In 1996, I became an adjunct instructor at University of Maryland University College (UMUC) in the Information Systems Department. And, I am still an adjunct there. I left the Census Bureau in 1997 to be a computer analyst for the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI). I worked there three years. I left ONI in 2000 to work at the National Security Agency (NSA) as an information systems security engineer. I also had many other career roles at the agency: executive staff officer, system engineer, cryptographic designer, engineering leader of operation researchers, and my current job as a computer security manager.

I did two joint duty assignments for the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon and at the Defense Information Systems Agency.

My reason for becoming active with the alumni association/staying connected to the University is … that I remember where I came from and where I received a great education.

In my spare time, I … am finishing my Doctorate in Information Assurance. Who knows … I may end up working for Pitt-Greensburg! I also keep up on the Pittsburgh sports teams: college, NFL, NHL, and MLB.

My family members … have degrees from Pitt. My aunt received a degree in medicine, in addition to my three cousins who received degrees in teaching, computer science, and psychology. My nephew received a degree in communications and political science.

Tell us something we didn't ask … I believe very strongly in the importance of education. In addition to my Pitt degree, I earned an MS in computer science (1994 from UMUC), an MS in business (2008 from UMUC), and an ME in systems engineering (2014 from Stevens Institute in Technology), and, as mentioned earlier, I am working on a DSc at the University of Fairfax.

I believe that education can give you opportunities that you never anticipated. Hail to Pitt!

Alumni Spotlight: Pamela Park Price ’86

Pamela Park Price graduated from the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg in 1986 with a political science major and an economics minor. Read more about her life during and after Pitt-Greensburg.

The thing that drew me to Pitt-Greensburg was … that the campus was close to home and allowed me to also work 48 hours per week while completing my degree.

My first impression of Pitt-Greensburg was … that it was a small campus—just two buildings in the ’80s but still offered many degrees. I was also offered some great internship opportunities working with a United States congressman and a member of the House of Commons in Great Britain.

My favorite thing as a student/fondest memory was … being a part of the Pitt community in a setting that was more interactive with one-on-one attention.

The faculty member who had the greatest influence on me was … Dr. Carl Poke. He was very influential in my transfer decision to Pitt and was one of the best professors in engaging his students to love the major of political science.

After Pitt-Greensburg, I went on to … begin a career in banking that I have grown to love. Even though it’s not my field of study, the skills I learned about politics apply to the business world when dealing with individuals at all levels in a company.

My reason for staying connected to the University is … to try to help graduating students understand the job market they are about to enter and help promote the campus.

In my spare time, I … am a Pirates season ticket holder, so my summer home is PNC Park. I also watch whatever hockey game is available to me, although the Pens are my favorite.

My family is … the most important to me. I have two children who are the most caring, mature and supportive young adults I know. They keep me grounded and focused.

Tell us something we didn’t ask … Before coming to Pitt as a transfer student, I was a sportscaster and enjoy announcing to this day.

Alumni Spotlight: Randy Stashick '82

It's a wonderful life for Randy Stashick '82. Recently retired, the former Global President of Engineering at UPS was the youngest of four children and the first to attend college in his family. Randy describes himself as a kid from Mount Pleasant who had the opportunity to work through the ranks of UPS, which ultimately led him around the world. He acknowledges that it took a lot of hard work and sacrifice, but also credits his time at Pitt-Greensburg as the start of it all.

Financing his own education, Randy needed to stay local and liked the Pitt-Greensburg campus. He arrived planning to go into physical therapy, but due to the limited number of acceptances into the program, he considered other options. Although good at math, he had taken a psychology class as an elective and really enjoyed it, along with sociology. He liked dealing with people and knowing what motivated them: "I pursued something that I found interesting, thinking that I could use this somewhere, thinking it would be human resources or something like that upon graduation."

In September of his freshman year, he was walking to his car after class and a friend told him that UPS was recruiting in the Student Activities Center (now known as McKenna Hall). Randy walked back, filled out an application, and was hired a week later. He worked as a part-time package handler in the evening while taking classes to earn a BS in psychology during the day.

Randy ended up spending 38 ½ years with UPS—including over 37 years in management. Randy believes his psychology degree had a tremendous impact on his management style: "Especially in management, you have to do things through people. And the way to handle people, motivate people, treat people, read people, better understand people—I think I got the majority from the degree. And I think it helped me throughout my career."

He spent almost 10 years in operations and the rest in engineering, relocating five times, moving from the East Coast to the West Coast, and ultimately ending up at the headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Randy ran all operations in the state of Georgia as the COO and President.

As the Global President of Engineering for the last nine years of his career, Randy oversaw plant engineering for more than 1,800 facilities worldwide. "I saw things that I never would have seen in my life," Randy said, noting his interest in architecture that started in a fine arts elective at Pitt-Greensburg. "One may think that it was an easy class to take and it was an easy grade to get,

but I learned the most from it. I learned to appreciate everywhere I went around the world from what I learned in that class."

Other memories Randy has of his time at Pitt-Greensburg include the personal relationships. He recalls the professors as being dedicated to their profession and supportive of the students. He said he made lifelong friends with some of his classmates—some were in his wedding, adding "So that's always going to be special."

Prior to retirement, Randy sat on a couple university boards. He served on the Georgia Institute of Technology Board for six years and Kettering University Board of Trustees for almost 8 years. "I really got tuned in to what runs an institution, what's involved with it." Randy continues to serve on the United Way of Greater Atlanta Board of Directors.

"Companies like UPS, is a 24/7 job. So you're extremely busy and you work extremely hard, but you're rewarded for it, too. Now you get a chance to do some things that you may not have had time to do before," Randy said of his early retirement that coincided with his daughter getting married last year. This next phase of Randy's life will be dedicated to time with family, traveling, golfing, giving back to the community, and, as time permits, doing some consulting work—not to mention the chance to attend the Pitt-Penn State game!

Randy returned to campus last year—the first time since he left the area in 1990. "It had grown so much," he said, noting that Smith Hall was one of the newer buildings when he was a student and the lawn where he had played flag football was now a residence hall. He also stopped by the campus store to buy a shirt for the game.

Thinking back to his college years, Randy compared the interconnectedness of those decisions to the story depicted in the classic holiday film *It's a Wonderful Life*, sharing that if he hadn't turned around that day in the parking lot at Pitt-Greensburg, he may not have met his wife, Sandy, whom he was introduced to through a UPS contact. "If it wasn't for Pitt-Greensburg and UPS being there recruiting," Randy said, "you can argue that things may have changed a lot."