

John Voss



Having had my interest in science heightened at UAHS by Mr. Snouffer and Mr. Bowman (“There is a lot of physics in a _____.” I decided to major in chemistry, first at Ohio University and then at Ohio State. I progressed pretty well until encountering organic chemistry. After organic “kicked my butt”

twice, I decided maybe chemistry was not the best route after all. I switched to Computer and Information Science having taken a FORTRAN programming course as suggested by my academic advisor. (“I think computers will become important in the future. You should take at least one programming course.”)

While switching majors was the right thing for me, it put me square in the sights of Uncle Sam. Since I would not graduate on time, I lost my 2S and shortly thereafter received my draft notice. I had earned my private pilot’s license so the Air Force seemed like a better option than the Army or Marines. I visited the Air Force recruiter and enlisted, joining just after New Year’s in 1971.

During basic training the Air Force gives a language aptitude test. Thanks to my French and Russian while at Arlington, I apparently did quite well and was offered language school. I accepted without thinking the Air Force might just as easily send me to learn Vietnamese. Fortunately, they decided on Russian. After 18 months of tech schools, including 9 months of Russian training in Monterey, CA, I received orders to join a squadron in Fairbanks, Alaska. I drove from Columbus to Fairbanks, 4200 miles via the then all gravel 1500 miles of the Alcan Highway, in 7 days.



The squadron in Fairbanks flew RC-135 reconnaissance missions against the then Soviet Union. We also flew missions out of RAF Mildenhall in the UK and from Shemya AFB, located at the far western end of the Aleutian Islands. This was the most interesting and sometimes harrowing job I ever had.

I completed my enlistment in 1974 and returned to Columbus and Ohio State, intending to finish my CIS degree. In addition to attending OSU, I worked part-time and refereed ice hockey for little kids through college and even minor league pro (Columbus Owls). I met my wife to-be, Julie, through my sister Kristi (UAHS '67), but really got to know her in the summers, when I coached the Doctors Hospital women's softball team.

Eventually I tired of poverty and left school to take a job as a programmer at Huntington National Bank. Julie and I were married in 1980. The 80's were a very eventful decade for the Voss family. We built our first house and welcomed the arrival of three children. Our daughter Erin, now a doctor, was born in 1983 followed by Stephanie, a nurse, in 1986 and Kevin, a mechanical engineer, in 1989. (Never thought I would be having kids at 41.) I stayed at Huntington for 21 very enjoyable years, leaving as the Chief Technology Officer following a management "shake-up". Huntington gave me the opportunity to meet and work with many great people and to travel both domestically and internationally.

The job-change took the family to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where I accepted the position of Chief Information Officer at M&I Marshall & Ilsley Bank. Unfortunately, the bank made more than a few bad business decisions and was sold to Bank of Montreal (BMO) in December 2010. In anticipation of retirement, Julie and I had purchased a house on Lake Keowee in Seneca, SC two months earlier. While I had not planned to retire for 3-5 more years, BMO decided they would not need me after December 2011. While my career at M&I was unexpectedly cut short, it was another great experience and a job I thoroughly enjoyed, except of course, for the dismantling part at the end.

Rather than try to find an appropriate job at 63 years old and in a down economy, I opted to retire. (Fortunately, what an Indian gentleman I once worked with said, "Information Technology has been very good to me." was also true for me.) So in early 2012, Julie and I moved to Seneca, SC leaving the Wisconsin winters far behind.

Today, "work" consists of serving as president of our homeowners' association, serving on Seneca's Zoning Board of Appeals and, most importantly, keeping up with Julie's "honey do list". We have had to make more than a bit of a cultural adjustment. While we had previously lived in cities of over a million, we are now living in small town America, population 10,000 – less than one quarter the population of Dublin. We have a Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Lowe's and Belk's, what more do you need? I have also had to adjust to many of the ladies calling me "honey" at



the store, library, etc. Erin married Scott McDonald in June 2015 and earlier this year surprised us with the news that they are expecting our first grandchild. Julie could hardly wait to tell everyone, and I do mean everyone.

Over the years Julie and I developed a “bucket list”, which includes such things as; visiting all of the National Parks, driving to Alaska, attending a College World Series, attending an NCAA basketball “Final Four” and perhaps even attending an Olympics (but not in Brazil). To help accomplish several of these goals, we purchased a motorhome in 2015 and “hit the road”. Our first trip took us to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Great Sand Dunes, and Mesa Verde national parks. While I never thought I would do it, we also took advantage of free overnights in Wal-Mart parking lots. Later this summer we are headed to Badlands, Wind Cave, Mt Rushmore, Glacier, Yellowstone, Craters of the Moon and Rocky Mountain national parks.

We might have started a bit late to make it to all 58, but we will have fun trying. Most importantly we must be back in time to welcome the arrival of our first grandchild in November! Most importantly we must be back in time to welcome the arrival of our first grandchild in November

This will be the first UAHS reunion I have attended. Hopefully, it will not be my last.