

Featured Alum: John Summers, attended 1986-1990

Years Attended: 1986-90

Area of Study: Mechanical Design



I graduated from Bradshaw Mountain High School (in Dewey) in 1983. After that, I went to work at various entry-level jobs. After doing this for a couple of years, I decided that I needed more for my life and that I needed to further my education. In 1986, I decided to start taking a few classes at Yavapai College. I didn't have a clue what I wanted to do with my life, so I just took a variety of technical classes (diesel and auto mechanics, welding and so forth). I still didn't really know what I wanted to do so I continued to take various classes without a real goal.

In the variety of classes that I was taking at the time, I happened to take a course in Dr. Larry Strom's mechanical engineering program- he was instrumental in my career choice of mechanical

design. He was an inspirational instructor with a passion for his students and he empowered them with knowledge and the ability to "think outside of the box". Even though his degree program was only a two-year program, he would pride himself on teaching the program like a four-year course. I believe he left a tremendous impact on many of his students.

I graduated from YC in 1990- it was the busiest time of my life! I got married the year before, bought a house in Prescott Valley, had my first child on the way, was taking several college classes each semester and on top of that, I was working 50-60 hours per week! I was getting very little sleep, but it was worth it to earn my degree (I was the first in my family to achieve this goal).

I was working for Ruger Firearms at the time- they were very gracious at supporting my schooling. They promoted me to the engineering department a couple of months before I graduated from YC. I continued to use the skills that I had learned at YC until 1997 when I moved to Texas.

I started out in Texas as an AutoCAD mechanical designer helping to design oil field equipment. I begin to learn other software programs such as Solid Edge and Solidworks 3d design packages- this vastly improved the ability to bring complex mechanical solutions and ideas to reality. I also worked for a military contractor that designed ship cranes and elevators- mostly for the US Navy LPD-17 project.

In 2005, I joined a company here in Fort Collins, Colorado utilizing my solid modeling skills. But instead of modeling complex mechanical components and assemblies, I would be modeling buildings. It was an interesting switch using my modeling skills to model architectural models instead of mechanical components. The buildings that we model are some of the most complex, premiere buildings in the world today. The company is CPP Wind Engineering, Inc. We build scale portions of cities and test our clients' buildings in large wind tunnels to examine the pressures that winds apply to the building surfaces. We also perform environmental wind tunnel testing and CFD (computational fluid dynamics).

Recently, I flew out to San Diego to attend Solidworks World 2008- a yearly event where Solidworks Corporation showcases the latest technologies and innovations in design. While I was there, I tested (and passed) the Solidworks Professional Certification test. It is a challenging test that ensures that a user has the necessary skills to be proficient with Solidworks.

I owe a lot to Yavapai College- the skills that I learned through the degree program propelled me into a career that I could only dream about without the education.