Mathematical Autobiography

Derek Sturgill

I was born in Athens County, however I was raised in Jackson, Ohio. My family consists of my mom, dad, and two brothers. I am the dreaded middle child of the family, which if you knew me would explain a lot of things. One interesting fact about me, is that I am a twin. No, we are not identical, but we can finish each other sentences and so forth. To finish our family tree I have a German Shepherd, Hannah, and two barn cats, Socks and Alexus.

Early in life, I was fascinated about how things work. I still enjoy tearing the guts out of something to see how it ticks. My grandmother owns a cattle farm in Patriot, Ohio. I can't begin to count the number of times I have sat back and watched my Papaw fix something on the farm. I am still amazed at the level of ingenuity one has to have to work on the farm. Many things can't be fixed with just duct-tape. One has to analyze the situation at hand to find the best cost effect, durable solution. One can not go from day to day without using math on the farm. From analyzing soil samples, growth production rates, fuel consumption, to business logs math encompasses you. I know my interest in math started at the farm, blossomed through middle school, and continues to grow today.

My college educational experience have been centered the tri-state area. In 2006, I received my B.S. in Mathematics with a minor in Physics from the University of Rio Grande in Rio Grande, Ohio. In 2007, I started my M.A. in Mathematics at Marshall University. The following school year, I started working on my thesis, Radial Basis Functions with Variable Shape Param-

eters. My thesis advisor, Dr. Sarra, graciously worked with me throughout the length of my thesis. Some of the math classes I took at Marshall are the following; Linear and Abstract Algebra, Probability and Statistic, Game Theory, Numerical Analysis, and Math Modeling. I do, however, enjoy other educational fields such as history and biology.

I am interested in this research group, because I am fascinated in the numerical side of life. I hope, by joining this research group I become more knowledgable in Numerical Analysis, research methods, and different points of view.

My preferred learning style, determined by VARK, discovered that I have a mild read/write learning preference. I agree with VARK. I learn better from reading and writing than say, visual. Visual had a score of two, while the other learning styles were six or greater. My score for reading and writing learning style was a ten.