



Profiles of Mathematicians



Bonita Saunders

Mathematician
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD

Education:

B.A. - Mathematics, College of William and Mary

M.S. - Mathematics, University of Virginia

Ph.D. - Mathematics, Old Dominion University

Job Description:

Mathematician, providing mathematical research support to scientists.

Advice to Students:

"You really need the ability to write well and communicate well for any job you're in."

Comments:

Although very busy with her career, Bonita finds time to operate a tutoring program at her church, helping elementary, secondary, and college students in mathematics.

Video Transcript 1:

"One thing I've noticed since I've been in my position is that I've used just about all the math I've learned. I can't say that there's anything I've taken, any math course I've taken that was completely irrelevant. It just seems like sooner or later, everything is important. And that's sort of a surprise to me. And the other thing that's a big surprise, when you get into the working world, not just here, but any type of job, is how important communication is. I actually worked in private industry for a few years before I came to NIST. It was really surprising how important it was to be able to write well, to speak well, to communicate your ideas. And I think if one thing is underemphasized in school it's that you really need the ability to write well and communicate well for any job you're in."

Video Transcript 2:

"I actually enjoyed working in all three environments. Teaching was very rewarding, but it was a lot of hard work. In the private sector, well that was interesting, but I guess the main thing you notice about the private sector is you always feel sort of a lack of security. You'd go from one project, and then after a while that project's over, the funding is over and so you wonder: OK. What do I do next? In a government research lab it's a little bit different. No job is completely secure, but from day to day you sort of have a better idea of what you're going to do and you can map out what you think you want to do in the next few weeks, the next few months, and sort of follow along with that."

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