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## Dan and Beth Dakin: Together at UMD and NIST

Dan Dakin received his bachelor's degree from the University of Delaware. Beth Rogers attended Georgetown University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Physics. Eventually, they were both led to the University of Maryland where they obtained their Ph.D.s and began their relationship.

This past September, three months after defending their theses, Beth and Dan got married. Among those in attendance were their advisors, Tom Cohen and Raj Roy.

"We shared a TA office on the fourth floor during our first year at UMD," said Dan. "Our desks were next to each other. We took all the same classes and did our homework together."

For Dan, the Physics journey began as a child interested in Math. As a teenager, he'd spend time browsing through his father's chemical engineering textbooks. He was fascinated to see the world described with equations. As the popularity of "Star Trek" began to increase, so did Dan's curiosity in Physics.

"Star Trek" hit me and I began to wonder about the strange things they talked about," said Dan. "My mind and imagination has been running ever since."

While studying at Delaware, it was already in Dan's plans to attend grad school. After comparing the top 20 schools, and applying to those with nice weather, he decided on Maryland because of their wide variety of research opportunities as well as its close proximity to his home.

Beth's journey began in high school, where she excelled in mathematics and physics was a fun way to be able to use the math that she learned. In addition, she had a fascination with building things and tinkering in the lab. She came to Maryland to earn a graduate's degree and chose Physics, because the department was welcoming and friendly.

"I find it very exciting to be able to use small, understandable laboratory experiments to understand something as complex as the actual world that we live in," said Beth.

They both enjoyed their experiences at Maryland. With the added stress of dealing with graduate school, it helped that they had each other for support.

While they spent, almost, everyday of their first year together they found ways to keep the relationship separate.

"There was study time and fun time," said Dan. "Keeping them well-defined made our personal time together much more special."

The following years were spent focusing on different projects at different locations.

"I learned a lot from my courses and did a lot of exciting research," said Dan. "I enjoyed the Physics department (tea at 3:30 p.m.), the campus and College Park. I started to enjoy college sports: ACC football champs and NCAA basketball champs my first year there."

After graduation, their major problem was searching for jobs in the same area. They considered all possible options and were flexible about the area of Physics in which they looked for positions. Their resumes were sent to universities within high-density areas, including Boston and North Carolina.

In the end, they each got offers at three places. However, they both decided on the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

"Working at two different places was an option, but we knew that would not be ideal since someone would suffer a nasty commute," said Beth. "Besides, we really enjoy being together and having a job at the same place allows us to share a commute and time during the day."

Beth is a National Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow. She is currently working on experiments in nanometrology. Dan is a Postdoctoral Researcher studying atomic physics with the grand goal of building a quantum computer.

"There is an initial uncomfortable period that almost all post-docs go through when they start to do research on their own, without the guiding hand of an advisor," they've both said. "But we stayed focused and feel comfortable and happy. The government is a good place for couples. There are a lot of organizations that pursue a diverse selection of science."

*If you are interested in contacting Dan or Beth Dakin, please send your messages to the Editor, who will be happy to forward your questions and comments.*