It's an incredible honor to be here in the room with so many people who have been friends and mentors through the years. Engineering graphics became my field of choice because I knew being an art major was probably not something that was going to make me a decent living, pre-med quickly bored me, then I thought about how interesting my shop classes were in high school, especially drafting, and how much fun I'd always had working with my Dad on his projects. He was in special ops in the military and after that always worked mechanical or machinist or maintenance sorts of jobs. And he was always building and fixing things around the house, everything from plumbing, to lawn mowers, to cars and trucks and tractors, to electronic things. And I knew I could do much worse than grow up to be like my Dad. He was always supportive of me and my pursuits, even if they didn't quite fit the mold of what all the rest of the girls my age were doing.

Being a professor was never high on my list of possible careers when I was younger. I first started teaching completely by accident. Long story shorter, I found out when I arrived at the Purdue campus to start my Masters that they'd made a mistake when they sent me a letter saying I'd been awarded an assistantship so instead of having school paid for, I owed them something along the lines of $10,000. I was freaking out, just a tiny bit. I went to see Dennis Depew, who was chair of the Department of Industrial Technology at the time, and explained my situation. He asked what my background and interests were, then took me down the hall to meet Jerry Smith the chair of Technical Graphics, who hired me on the spot as a TA. He took a huge chance on me that I'll never be able to thank him enough for.

Whilst working on my Masters I TA'd for Judy Birchman, Mary Sadowski, Bill Ross, Gary Bertoline, and Craig Miller and grew to love teaching. I graduated, left Purdue, and Indiana, and worked for about five years teaching, doing CAD work for a city utility company, and also quite a bit of facility planning and construction drawings for various companies and individuals. Then I decided I wanted to have a full time career as a professor and that I needed a PhD, as you do. Here's a hint, don't buy a brand new F-150 XLT with all the toys and options, and then decide a few months later to quit your job and go back to school! It makes balancing your finances a bit dodgy. Anyway, I emailed Gary Bertoline who was the department chair of Computer Graphics at Purdue at the time and told him I was thinking about coming back to school, but had some concerns about paying for it. He told me that if I wanted to come back to school, not to worry, that he'd find a way to help me pay for it, and he did. So I either worked as a graduate instructor, or helped out in the CGT advising office, or both, and was eventually hired as a visiting assistant professor, and that paid for my school. So I'm very thankful for Gary's assistance in not only giving me a job, but being on my graduate committee, and serving as an advisor and mentor in the years since. And there are a lot of you in this room who have been mentors and friends over the years; Sheryl Sorby, Ted Branoff, Frank Croft, Bob Chin, Dennis Lieu, and I'm going stop naming names because I know I'll leave people out.

But as important as teaching is to me, currently my job title indicates I am a teaching professor – which means teaching is my primary job, and I do some research and service on the side – I almost left teaching altogether six years ago. Before I moved to the land of lake effect snow that is Erie, PA (a record 198.5 inches last year!!!!), I had a job where, as much as I loved teaching, and enjoyed my students, and knew I was making a difference to them, the work environment was, to put it mildly, a bit not good. Many of you know the stories, and for the sake of time and decency, I'll leave them out. I was selectively applying to different jobs around the country, but nothing had worked out, either I wasn't right for the place or the place wasn't right for me. Some turned me down, and I turned some down. And even with the awesome support of the people in this Division, I'd made the decision that at the end of that academic year, I was leaving my job, no matter what. I had enough side jobs consulting and writing to keep me going for a while, and my backup plan was to move to northern Michigan, help my extended family on their farms, maybe teach at the local community college if anything opened up, and take a break from it all. But then, my friend, and a Division member, Kathy Holliday-Darr told me she was retiring

and that I should apply for her spot. I did, was interviewed, and was hired. From day one, it's been great. Even the weather.

And now we're on to the advice portion of this speech. To those of us "elders" in the crowd, being a mentor, along with being a champion for engineering graphics, is so important. Engineering graphics is a field that many in engineering education see as perhaps not as important as courses in topics like statics, or thermodynamics, or materials. But as I tell my students on day one of their first freshman engineering graphics course, nothing in this room could be built without a model and/or a technical drawing. What we do is the foundation of design and production. So support your colleagues who teach these courses, support our field in your department. Mentor and support young colleagues so that when we retire, we're confident we will be replaced with someone who will take up the charge for the field of engineering graphics. Make sure basic concepts are addressed and standards are implemented in the graphics courses. I get so much positive feedback from my School of Engineering's industry partners who hire our students as interns because most of their interns from other schools cannot do CAD work, cannot read drawings, and don't know anything about GD&T, and those from our programs have those skills. Tell new colleagues about our division, encourage them to come to not just the Annual conference, but to our Midyear meetings.

I remember my first Midyear meeting in San Antonio, TX in 2000. I had co-authored a paper with Judy Birchman, and I was overwhelmed, especially by meeting people whose papers I'd read and whose books I'd used both in class and for research, but also amazed by how friendly everyone was, how supportive they were of little old me as a lowly grad student. And everyone hugged, that was different. I believe it was Alice Scales who I first heard compare our Midyear meetings to a family reunion. And as someone who just attended a reunion of the crazy bunch that is the Study family, I can attest to the truth in that. I know I wouldn't be where I am if it weren't for the mentorship, collaboration, and most of all, friendships that have come out of being a member of this Division. So please continue your support of our colleagues and our field, and keep up the good work of mentorship and collaboration. Because of members of this Division I have authored and co-authored papers, co-authored textbooks, consulted on grants, received excellent teaching advice, always had a sounding board, and even had the opportunity to cross another continent off the list of those I've visited, thanks to Holly Ault for giving me the chance to visit Australia. If any of you are going to be in Africa or Antarctica, and are willing to host a visitor, I'm game! Those are the only two continents I've yet to set foot on.

And last, but definitely not least, thanks to everyone in this room, and to those who couldn't attend, and all the previous DSA winners who came before me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything through the years, and thank you for honoring me with the Distinguished Service Award.