

Joanna Schmit, PhD, 1996



Robert, Matthew, Joanna and Patrick Schmit

What influenced your decision to attend graduate school at OSC?

Marrying an American, meeting professor Bill Wolfe in Poland, and OSC's strong interferometry program with big names such as professors Jim Wyant and Kathy Creath.

What do you wish you would have known your first day of graduate school? Was there anything you wish you had done to prepare more for graduate school?

It would have been helpful to have had a better proficiency in English, and a greater understanding of spoken English with different accents, on the first day of graduate school.

Which classes did you find most enjoyable? Which ones did you find most difficult?

The classes I found most enjoyable were Aberrations with Roland Shack, Interferometry with Jim Wyant, Optical Testing with Kathy Creath, and Thin Film with Angus Macleod. My most difficult classes were Math with Harry Barrett and Quantum Optics with Rick Shoemaker.

Was there an individual (professor, advisor, staff, friend, family member) who played a particularly important role in your education?

Malgorzata Kujawinska and Krzysztof Patorski from Warsaw University of Technology, Jim Wyant and Kathy Creath from OSC, and my husband, Robert, who was taking care of our kids and helping me learn English.

What was your research while attending OSC?

Phase shifting interferometry.

What was the cost of rent in Tucson while you were in school?

\$500/month.

If you owned a car during graduate school, what year and model was it?

1986 Pontiac 6000 station wagon.

What was your favorite restaurant/student hangout near campus?

Rincon Market very occasionally, when I had '2 for 1' coupons.

What did you do for fun during your time in graduate school?

Raise our children. Both sons were born during my PhD program, one five months after starting graduate school and the other five months before graduation.

What was most memorable about your commencement ceremony?

The ceremony was held at McKale Center, and I could not believe the number of students participating.

At the time of your graduation, what were the most sought-after jobs/most popular industries/most popular companies?

For me, the most sought-after job was working for Jim Wyant at WYKO. 😊

What was your first job after graduation?

WYKO, Tucson.

What was the most significant world event during your time in graduate school. How were you affected by this event?

The end of communism in Eastern Europe meant a better chance for my parents visiting their grandkids in Tucson.

Was there a campus or community event in Tucson that was especially important to you?

We were busy raising our boys, so everything evolved around them.

What advice would you give to this year's graduating class?

Things are really possible if you believe in yourself, and have great support in your partner and friends.