

# Meet Featured Alum

## April Teske Van Hise

Stetson University Class of 2001



### Biography:

April (Teske) Van Hise grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta, GA. She attended Stetson from 1997 to 2001 and graduated with a B.S. in physics and a minor in music. She also met her husband, Dennis Van Hise, at Stetson and they married in 2002. Her favorite hobby is traveling and taking lots of pictures.

### Open letter to physics majors:

Hello Hatters!

I hope you're having as much fun as I did at Stetson. You have a great physics department with the same professors I had. Their advice and teachings are truly invaluable. Take advantage of it while you can.

As for me, yes you read the bio correctly. I'm one of the few physics majors who ventured out into the world with just my Bachelor's degree. My decision to stop at a Bachelor's degree has worked well for me, but as Dr. Jusick told me, if you have any desire

to get your Ph.D. or Master's, do it now. This is sage advice. College is a very different lifestyle and it's very difficult to go back. Once you start working you get used to having money.

I took a fairly diverted path to getting a physics degree and working in R&D. In grade school, I played saxophone in the band for years and truly enjoyed performing, so I decided to pursue music as my major in college. I chose Stetson because of its superb music school and of course the warm location. The music school was great but I found myself dreading to practice all day long for the rest of my life. I realized I would always be playing the same notes, honing my skills, but never really learning anything new. I wanted a more dynamic career, one where I could learn something new almost every day. So I turned to science. My second year at Stetson I changed my major to physics. I still enjoy music but I don't regret my decision to learn physics. I originally planned to go all the way and get my Ph.D., but by my senior year I was ready to get out into the work force.

I've spent most of my career working in R&D at DuPont. I work as a Laboratory Scientist/Technician spending most of my time with hands-on work in the lab implementing the ideas from the Ph.D.'s. I really enjoy running the experiments myself and coming up with results. Of course I get some of the grunt work, but I still prefer my roll. Ph.D.'s tend to go to meetings, come up with ideas, tell their technicians what to work on, and compile/interpret the results. Being a technician is not brainless work though. The Ph.D.'s always invite our suggestions. Sometimes the Ph.D.'s have an idea of what kind of data they want and with our technical know-how and practical experience we focus on getting it done while they go on to other responsibilities. My job involves a lot of problem solving and attention to detail. That has been my experience in the corporate world.

Getting a job with a B.S. in physics has its pros and cons. It can be difficult because people don't quite know what to do with you. Physics majors aren't all that common so employers aren't sure what you can do. You can get through this by elaborating on your resume in a cover letter. Include information that's not in your resume. Address the position you're applying for and explain why you can do the job. The great thing about having a B.S. in physics is that it's the most difficult and feared science, so if you can do that you can do a number of science jobs. For instance, I work at DuPont which is a chemical company. Most people in the company have degrees in chemistry, and I've had some people say that I should be able to understand the chemistry easily since I was able to do physics. Be sure to visit the Career Resources Center there at Stetson to get help writing your resume and get advice on how to get through an interview.

These are the places I've worked and the responsibilities I've had since receiving my B.S. in physics:

National High Magnetic Field Laboratory in Tallahassee, FL

- Provided user support to scientists from all over the world that came to use the Laboratory's experimental facilities.

- Learned Labview programming to control various instruments.
- Maintained equipment and performed any needed repairs.
- Handled cryogens and assisted in the maintenance of a top loading dilution refrigerator.

DuPont Central Research and Development in Wilmington, DE

- Examined luminescence through the use of spectroscopic techniques involving spectrometers, monochromators, CCD cameras, lasers, and lamps.
- Performed low temperature experiments using cryostats.
- Composed data analysis reports on research results.
- Participated in safety reviews of laboratory equipment and processes.
- Programmed and operated an automated system that creates samples at a high rate.
- Created Labview programs to acquire, analyze, and log data.

Forensic Analytical Services, Inc. in Hayward, CA

- Prepared and tested samples possibly contaminated with lead using a Flame Atomic Absorption Spectrometer.
- Collapsed air filters with possible asbestos onto grids used for analysis in a Transmission Electron Microscope.

DuPont in Chemical Solutions Enterprise in Wilmington, DE.

- Working in Lubricants Group addressing customer concerns of Krytox product.
- Characterizing Krytox products by running tests for viscosity, oil separation, color, and corrosion.
- Determining content of unknown or used grease using FTIR spectroscopy.
- Developed a method to quantify particle size in greases.
- Participating in safety write-ups and reviews of laboratory equipment and processes.

Good luck!

–April

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April has graciously shared her contact information with us so that any interested student (prospective or current) can get in touch with her:

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