Meet Featured Alum:

Paul Hastings

Stetson Class of '87

Paul Hastings grew up in Tampa, Fl the youngest of 5 children. His father was a Southern Baptist minister which influenced his decision to attend a Baptist school. In 1983 he graduated from Leto High School in the top 5% of his class. He was an avid tennis player and lettered in the sport. At Stetson, aside from being a physics lab assistant, he was involved in numerous intramural sports including tennis and also joined the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

He graduated from Stetson in 1987 with a BS in Physics and a minor in Applied Mathematics. His career began as a high school physics teacher in Delray Beach, FL. He later went on to help start a medical services firm in Delray Beach.

In 1995, Paul and his wife moved to Minnesota to begin their family.

While in Minnesota, he joined Kavouras, Inc., a doppler radar manufacturer, as a business development manager. Several years later, he joined ImpactWeather, Inc. in Houston, TX as their VP Sales and Business Development.

Today, Paul is happily married to Barb Hastings and they have 3 children (Emily 11, Sara 9 and Jack 7). The children have been attending Spanish Immersion schools since Kindergarten and are all bi-lingual.

Open Letter to Stetson University Physics Majors:

I must be completely honest with you from the start that I am absolutely stunned to have been invited to participate in the Featured Alum program. When I graduated from high school in 1983, I really had no idea what I was going to be when I "grew up". My brother-in-law was a civil engineer and I knew that I wanted to be a lot like him so I decided to pursue a career in engineering. In high school, I made straight A's in science and math so this seemed like a worthy path.

When it came time to escape to college, I did not feel like I was ready for the giant university culture like UF or FSU, so I pursued only smaller schools like Stetson. I figured that most schools offered similar curriculum the first 2 years anyway and I really loved what I saw at Stetson. Stetson offered a terrific pre-engineering program so I jumped at the

opportunity. Once I began my studies, I learned that my passion was not in engineering, but rather physics and math so I decided to remain at Stetson for my entire undergraduate study.

In 1987, I graduated with my BS in Applied Physics. My degree helped me get my first job as a high school physics teacher in Palm Beach County, FL. In Palm Beach County (and many other school districts), science and math teachers are in very high demand. So, even though I was not educated to teach, I was hired by the district and they paid for me to become a certified teacher. I must say that this was one of the most rewarding and enjoyable jobs I have ever had. However, I still hadn't discovered my passion so I pressed forward. I became friends with the parents of one of my students who happened to be starting a new business. They hired me to help them build the company.

Well, the company wound up doing very well and was eventually acquired by a larger competitor several years later. Although the business was doing very well, and I had discovered my passion of business development, I was losing touch with my physics and math beginnings. So I began to search for a business development opportunity where I could also utilize my physics and math. I landed with a company in Minnesota that was searching for someone with a physics education but with a business development background. That's me! This company manufactured Doppler Radar systems for business and government and they brought me in to help develop their radar business to take advantage of this developing radar technology. The company also revolutionized radar data itself by colorizing the various reflected intensity levels. Previously there were only shades of green and you had to be a radar expert to interpret what you were viewing.

I spent a considerable amount of time traveling the country meeting with television stations and electric utilities where I had the opportunity to make technical and business presentations to engineers, IT techs, operations managers and C level executives. Interestingly, it was the electric utility industry where I enjoyed my greatest successes. Almost none of them had any severe weather tracking capabilities to speak of so there was quite a bit of education involved in the early years. Today, every electric utility is well-resourced when it comes to severe weather tracking. In fact, some have even gone so far as to hire their own meteorologists.

Three years ago, I was recruited by another weather firm in Houston to come in and help build their weather business. This was an exciting challenge but one that offered a great deal of upside potential. This weather firm was different from my previous company in that they were more of a service provider rather than a data provider. Their expertise was in hurricane forecasting and offshore weather support.

Today, I am VP Sales and Business Development for ImpactWeather, Inc. Most offshore oil and gas rigs in the Gulf of Mexico are ImpactWeather clients and we are quickly expanding internationally. Also, because of our hurricane expertise, we have developed many tools to help our clients make informed decisions. Probably the most popular tool

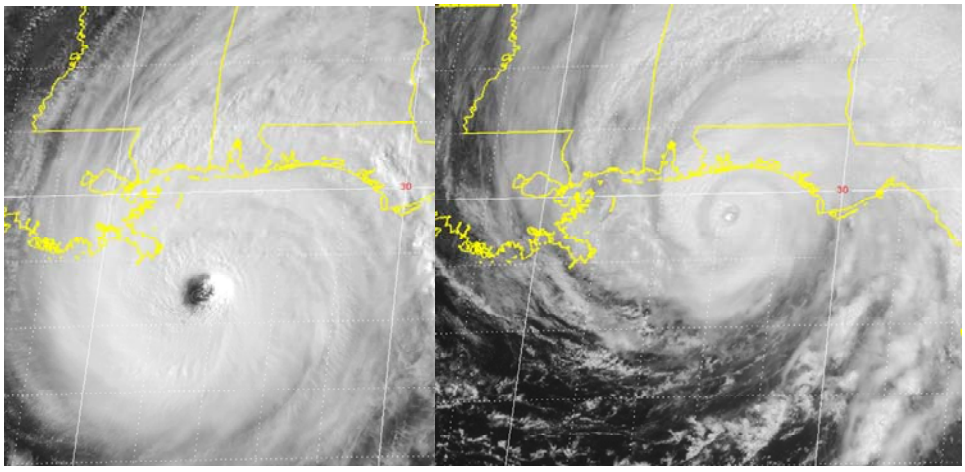
that we developed is a new hurricane classification system called "Hurricane Severity Index". The current system utilized by the National Hurricane Center is the Saffir Simpson Scale. This scale was developed back in 1969 and is based on maximum sustained winds in a hurricane. The 3 reasons why this system is inadequate for today's world are: 1) Only takes into account maximum sustained winds; 2) Doesn't consider a storm's size; 3) Doesn't consider tropical storms.

The Hurricane Severity Index (HSI) looks at both storm intensity as well as storm size. It can also be applied to tropical storms. One thing that we discovered was that large storms can produce a considerably larger storm surge than smaller storms with similar intensities. See the example below comparing 2 recent category 3 hurricanes:

Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis – Two Very Different Category 3s

Hurricane Ivan – 105 kts / 120 mph
Storm Surge – 10-15 ft
Size Points – 21
Intensity Points – 12
HSI at Landfall = 33

Hurricane Dennis – 105 kts / 120 mph
Storm Surge – 6-9 ft
Size Points – 6
Intensity Points – 12
HSI at Landfall = 18



This is very exciting work for me and it never ceases to amaze me how hungry businesses are today for better and more information. If I could offer any advice to you it's this: keep searching for what excites and motivates you. Whether it's educating America's youth or analyzing the rings of distant planets or discovering the newest micro particle, you can have a positive impact on this world through your love of physics. One thing is for sure, you're at the right place to start your journey. Enjoy your time in the Physics Department at Stetson. I don't think I could have done any of this without the foundation that I built right there in Sage Hall.

Warmest Regards,

~Paul Hastings

Paul has generously shared his contact information, should any current or prospective Stetson student wish to contact him....

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