

On Wed, Jul 14, 2010 at 1:32 AM, Kerry Smith <smithk149@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dr. Orneita Burton,

I read your bio and story and wished I could have contributed with how you helped a scared, lost, confused freshman Chemical Engineer at the University of Arkansas in 1978.

You may not remember me, but this is Kerry Smith. You tutored me my freshman year (1st semester) of Calculus I, referred to you by Dr. Tolliver.

You have no idea how many times I have told the story over the years of me leaving my first few days of Calculus crying when I got back to the dorm room because I had no idea what they were talking about for the first time in my life, and you came to the rescue (laugh).

It was great reading your story and I want to thank you for my career. I started my career with TRW's aeronautical, then oilfield services group for 4 years (Dallas and Bartlesville, Okla. respectively), then I worked for Bayer in Pittsburgh, Pa. and Leverkusen, Germany in rubber and rubber chemicals for 5 years, then Federal-Mogul Corporation in Ann Arbor, Michigan for 13 years, then Almatris Inc. in Pittsburgh for 4 years. I will be starting a new job in September for a company out of Germany named Nabaltec, which makes aluminum trihydroxide, aluminum oxide and various other aluminum and magnesium based flame retardant chemicals. At TRW I was a materials engineer, at Bayer I was in Technical Service and Technical Marketing for rubber and rubber chemicals, at Federal-Mogul I was the Director of Global R&D for the Sealing Systems Division, and at Almatris, I was the General Manager of one 3 divisions. I do more finance and management now than hard core engineering, but having been in engineering for so many years, particularly polymers and polymer rheology, my technology reports quickly find out I know when I am being b.s.ed (laugh).

The General Manager position at Almatris really wore me down, it was venture capital, I actually worked for Dubai International. The pressure, the stress, the global travel after awhile wasn't worth the great money. My new job is actually with Almatris largest competitor, but I will only be responsible for North, Central, and South America - better than waking up in Australia, China, and Russia several times per year.

I am married with 2 daughters. I have been married 22 years. My oldest daughter, Lauren is 20 years old and going into her senior year at Howard University - International Business and Finance; my youngest daughter, Maya is 18 years old and will be attending Austin Peay in the fall. We have just relocated to Memphis from Ann Arbor in February 2009. Memphis is a cultural adjustment from Ann Arbor / Detroit area, but the biggest thing is it doesn't require a snow shovel, I can golf and play tennis all year round almost.

By coincidence I ran into a cousin of yours in Detroit about 2 years back, I can't remember his name. He was referred to me because I was the highest ranking African American ever at Federal-Mogul and he

was told to talk to me about being African-American at Federal-Mogul. When I told him I had graduated from the University of Arkansas, some how your name came up. Wow it is a small world.

Anyway, I apologize for the long email. I just wanted to say thank-you for helping me many years ago. It was probably the most crucial time in my life, staying in chemical engineering given me global exposure (not that many African Americans in the rubber / polymer industry globally especially in rheology) and provided me with very lucrative compensation. By the way, my family is Church of Christ also. My wife was Church of Christ and I joined the church when we got married.

God Bless you Orneita and your family and again I can never repay you for your help and guidance over 30 years ago.

Kerry Smith