

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

JOHN SPENCE

WHAT DREW YOU TO VIRGINIA TECH?

Perfect circumstance: my wife got a job offer in Salem shortly after my son was born, so I browsed really quickly where I could find work. I had this job lined up before we listed our house in FL, so it was the easiest we could hope for with a two-career household moving to different state. It's been nice to be near family with a new young one. It worked out perfectly.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I was a retail employee for ToysRUs in Roanoke throughout highschool. It was an interesting place to work, especially during holidays. I worked during the Tickle Me Elmo craze and I remember people getting in fights over little stuffed Elmos. They kept me employed throughout college, so I could earn a little extra money on the side.

FAVORITE TYPE OF MUSIC?

All types: but maybe 90's and 00's era rock. Favorite is probably Queens of the Stone Age. No CDs, I buy digital. The last LP I bought was in college: *The Incident* by Porcupine Tree.

1st CONCERT YOU ATTENDED?

Metallica at the Roanoke Civic Center in 2004.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES?

Travel, hiking, movies. I've played guitar very badly for 20 years.

Random kid stuff: I'm trying to be a really good dad. My 5-year-old son started playing T-ball, I'm at every game, and I'll be coaching T-ball next spring for him.

ONE OF YOUR QUIRKS?

I leave the house at exactly 6:43 am every day.

FAVORITE PLACE YOU'VE VISITED? WHY DID YOU LIKE IT?

Travel has always been important in my family from when I was a kid to now with my son. We take a major vacation every year, and I have visited places all over the country and to Costa Rica, Ireland, Jamaica, and Mexico.

Costa Rica was awesome. The country is beautiful and the culture there is very warm and welcoming. We did everything from hiking in the rain forest to climbing up the side of a volcano to visiting some of the beaches. This year we'll go to a beach in NC, then next year to Italy.

ONE BUCKET LIST ITEM?

I want to visit all the inhabitable continents: Asia, Australia, Africa. I've never been to Iceland, but love scenic exploring, and they have natural geothermal features, glaciers, mountains, and of course we want to see the Northern Lights.

TRAVEL TIP?

Learn a few words of the language of wherever you are visiting.

EVER MET ANYONE FAMOUS?

When I was 8 years old, I went to school in Houston with the grandson of Jim Lovell, the commander of Apollo 13. He came to answer all sorts of questions for our class.

I also met 7-time NBA champion Robert Horry, who had played for the Rockets. I was in a bank, was in high school and about 6'1" at the time, but he towered over me. I have his signature on a bank statement.

FAVORITE HOLIDAY?

Christmas, because it's really fun with a 5 year old. More about giving gifts and making it magical for my son.



Senior Buyer (Procurement)

Hometown: Roanoke, VA

Joined Virginia Tech: 2019

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Job Responsibilities:

I facilitate the acquisition of goods and services for the university, including the competitive bid and proposal process. I work heavily with VT dining, the athletic dept, the Controller's office, University Bursar. That's what's interesting: it can be the business school, the College of Engineering, or one of the ARECs out across the state.

WHAT ARE SOME ATTRIBUTES OR STRENGTHS YOU BRING TO THE JOB?

I always want to help; I like being an open resource. Even if I don't know the answer to a question right away I'm always willing to jump in to brainstorm solutions. So many random issues can be thrown our way in this job, it's interesting to get in to learn something new and the best way to acquire it.

ONE CHORE YOU CAN'T STAND?

Laundry: I do the cooking and dishes at home and my wife does the laundry.

ANY PETS?

Toby, our 13-year-old black lab mix. He's lived with us in OH, NC, FL, and now VA.

DO YOU HAVE A PHOBIA?

Cockroaches! When I was a kid, a cockroach fell out of an AC vent, landed on me, and crawled down my shirt. The heebie-jeebies have lasted for 25 years.