

FRONTIERS

BYU COMPUTATIONAL, MATHEMATICAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCES SPRING 2026

BYU

150



CELEBRATING GIFTS OF LIGHT

FRONTIERS

BYU COMPUTATIONAL, MATHEMATICAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCES

SPRING
2026



Dean Grant J. Jensen, President C. Shane and Sister Wendy W. Reese, Kip S. Thorne, Elder Quentin L. Cook, and Elder Gerrit W. Gong mingle after Thorne's November 20, 2025, lecture at BYU. Thorne, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist and pioneer of gravitational-wave astronomy, was invited to speak by Elder Cook, a friend from his youth.



Dear alumni and friends,

The 2025–26 academic year has been a special one for BYU. We’ve celebrated 150 years since our founding! The sesquicentennial theme, Celebrating Gifts of Light, feels especially fitting as we honor incredible alumni from our college who continue to brighten the world with their talents and service.

In this issue of *Frontiers*, you’ll find stories about ten alumni who received this year’s Alumni Achievement Award. Each of these individuals is a shining example of what it means to share your light. Their paths are diverse—spanning science, business, education, and more—but they share a common purpose: lifting others and making a difference.

As you read these articles, I hope you feel the same sense of gratitude and inspiration as I do. These

alumni remind us that the power of a BYU experience doesn’t end at graduation; its influence grows and multiplies through the lives of those who carry its light into every corner of the world.

This celebration is also a chance to reflect on what makes BYU unique. It’s not just the education or the campus. It’s the people. It’s you! Every time you mentor a student, share your expertise, or simply live your values, you add to the light that began here 150 years ago. That light is what connects us as brothers and sisters in Christ, and it’s what will guide us into the future.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable community. Your support, whether through mentoring, donating, or simply cheering us on, helps keep that light burning bright for future generations.

Hurrah for Israel!

Sincerely,

Grant Jensen, *Dean*
BYU College of Computational, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences



INSIDE FRONT COVER PHOTO BY DAVID WEIBELL, INSIDE BACK COVER PHOTO BY JASON STUCKI

FRONTIERS

SPRING 2026

BYU COLLEGE OF COMPUTATIONAL, MATHEMATICAL & PHYSICAL SCIENCES

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FRONT COVER *Dan Delorey, Andrew Stacey, and Neha Rungta against a backdrop explosion of light (background: Luke Jones/ Unsplash; photo of Andrew Stacey courtesy of UW Medicine, photos of Dan Delorey and Neha Rungta courtesy of Dan Delorey and Neha Rungta).*

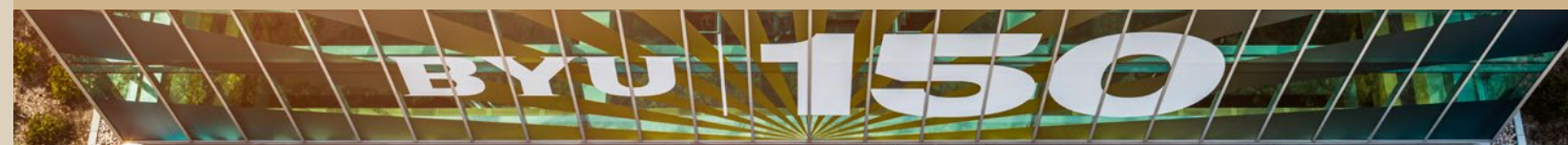
BELOW *BYU’s Harold B. Lee Library decked out in celebration of the sesquicentennial (BYU Photo).*

BACK COVER *Pete Roming (see pages 6–11) addresses students during his February 2026 visit to BYU campus to receive his Alumni Achievement Award (Grace Macfarlane).*

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Articles by Candice L. Macfarlane



Alumni Achievement Award Recipients

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



At the College of Computational, Mathematical, and Physical Sciences, our disciplines—chemistry, computer science, geological sciences, mathematics, math education, physics and astronomy, and statistics—are more than academic pursuits. They are engines of innovation that power progress in every field imaginable. From shaping global technology to solving complex societal challenges, the work of our alumni demonstrates the far-reaching impact of these sciences.

This year, we are proud to honor ten extraordinary alumni whose achievements exemplify the very best of our college. Each Alumni Achievement Award recipient has charted a unique path, whether in advancing medical analytics, driving innovation in artificial intelligence, or mentoring the next generation of problem-solvers.

As you explore their profiles, you'll discover a common theme: the power of faithful scholarship combined with dedication to improving lives. Their stories

reflect not only professional success but also the spirituality, strength of character, and commitment to learning and service that define a BYU education.

For decades, our college has invested deeply in undergraduate research, hiring students into labs, supporting faculty who design projects with undergraduates in mind, and creating opportunities for hands-on discovery. This commitment has shaped thousands of young scientists and continues to be one of the defining strengths of our programs.

Today, thanks to generous donors, we are able to fund every student who can find a faculty mentor. Donations, gifts, and scholarships directly fuel scientific discovery and expand access to transformative research experiences.

We invite you to celebrate with us as we recognize this year's Alumni Achievement Award recipients. Their journeys inspire us all to think bigger, aim higher, and use our talents to bless the world as we help prepare the rising generation of scientists and scholars to do the same. <#>

CAMPUS: BYU PHOTO

RAYS: UMBERTO/UNSPLASH





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Q&A WITH PETE ROMING



THE DEPARTMENT OF
**PHYSICS &
ASTRONOMY**

In 1998, Peter W. A. Roming (BS '91, MS '95, PhD '98) joined Penn State's research faculty, where he designed grazing-incidence x-ray mirrors for a rocket program and later contributed to NASA's Swift Gamma-Ray Burst mission. As principal investigator for the ultraviolet/optical telescope, he gained deep insight into NASA mission operations, project management, and the value of teamwork. Two years after Swift launched, Roming pursued his own mission—Joint Astrophysics Nascent Universe Satellite (JANUS)—aimed at detecting the universe's first stars and quasars. Although JANUS was not selected for flight, the experience taught him the importance of perseverance in research.

After twelve years at Penn State, Roming moved to the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) to establish an astrophysics group. There, he broadened collaborations, advanced mission development, and managed diverse projects, including avionics systems, spaceplane control systems, and instruments for planetary and ground-based observations. His leadership roles expanded further when he became head of the Department of Space Engineering and later chief scientist for the Space Systems division, gaining valuable experience in administration and strategic planning.

In 2024, Roming accepted a position as director of the Civil and Commercial Space Division at the Space Dynamics Laboratory in Logan, Utah, where he now focuses on executive leadership and strategic vision.

Q. What inspired you to pursue your career and how has it evolved over time?

A. My inspiration to pursue this career began when I took a graduate course in astrophysics from Harold McNamara at BYU. I was hooked. At the time, I didn't know much about black holes, but I knew I wanted to study them. That led me to work with J. Ward Moody on non-nuclear Seyfert activity, which is caused by the accretion of gas onto an intermediate-mass black hole. At the same time, I was involved with a BYU space project called GoldHelOX (Golden Heliocentric



“Allowing others the space to make mistakes and then being there to support and encourage them afterward is often one of the best ways to help people grow.”

Observations in X-Rays), where we designed and built a solar robotic space telescope. I served as project manager for part of the effort, and the combination of science, hands-on hardware development, and project management had a powerful and lasting influence on my career.

For roughly the first nineteen years of my professional journey, I continued to combine those interests—using science, engineering, and mission design to tackle challenging astrophysical questions, develop new technologies, and help advance space exploration.

At the end of that period, I was asked to lead a department, which opened a new chapter in my career. This role required blending tactical and strategic thinking to help others achieve departmental and divisional goals. I discovered that engaging people in a shared vision and supporting their success was deeply rewarding.

Later, when I had the opportunity to move into an executive-level role, I embraced it as a chance to see the broader picture. My appreciation for the diverse talents across the organization grew significantly. The focus shifted from advancing my own projects or research to enabling others to succeed in theirs, a challenge that has become one of the more meaningful and fulfilling aspects of my career.

Q. How did your time at BYU influence your career path and the choices that led to where you are today?

A. There are five main experiences at BYU that had a significant influence on my career path.

First, I met my wife, Teri. She encouraged and supported me through graduate school, throughout my career as we moved to different states, and during times when I traveled for work. Her encouragement and partnership have been among the most important influences in my professional and personal growth.

Second, the Physics and Astronomy Department allowed me to take an unconventional path during graduate school. I was able to work in both astrophysics and mechanical engineering, and that combination proved invaluable. It enabled me to bridge the communication gap between scientists and engineers, a skill that has benefited me throughout my career and continues to serve me well today.

Third, although it wasn't part of my formal coursework, the GoldHelOX project gave me my first real experience working on a multidisciplinary team and introduced me to the principles of systems engineering and project management. The lessons I learned there were instrumental in helping me secure my position at Penn State, and those same skills remain essential in my work today.

Fourth, taking religion classes, even as a graduate student, had a lasting impact on me. Those classes helped me learn how to maintain balance between my career and other aspects of life, which has been invaluable over the years.

Finally, serving in Church callings while at BYU helped me establish a lifelong pattern of service. You might ask what that has to do with my career, but through



(PAGES 8-9) TELESCOPE: COURTESY OF NASA'S GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER; ASTEROID: NASA/GODDARD/SWRI/JOHN HOPKINS APL/NOIRLAB; ROMING FAMILY: COURTESY OF PETE ROMING

those opportunities I learned how to be a better speaker, teacher, and leader. Those skills have carried over naturally into my professional life and continue to shape how I interact with others and lead teams.

Q. Were there any professors or leaders at BYU who had a lasting impact on you or who shaped who you are today?

A. My thesis and dissertation advisor, Ward Moody, had a particularly significant influence on me. He not only taught me astrophysics but also helped me learn how to think critically, how to treat others, and how to approach life with curiosity and integrity. He supported me in pursuing an unorthodox educational path that combined astrophysics, mechanical engineering, and project management. Under his mentorship, I was allowed to make mistakes, and I was always encouraged, never discouraged.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention Joseph Cannon and Vern Sommerfeld, who served in the stake presidency during my time at BYU. They taught me how to truly study the scriptures, and that experience has had one of the most profound and lasting influences on who I have become personally and professionally.

Q. In what ways do you feel you're sharing your light—whether through your work, service, or personal life?

A. One of the ways I strive to share my light is through teaching. I genuinely enjoy helping others learn, whether it's assisting a colleague at work in developing a new skill, teaching a lesson at church, mentoring someone one-on-one, or giving a public lecture on astrophysics, project management, or leadership. Whenever something I share helps someone improve or gain understanding or simply brightens someone's day, I feel that I'm passing along a bit of the light I've been given.

I don't consider myself someone who naturally excels at service, but as I've grown older, I've become more intentional about it. I've learned that meaningful service doesn't always come through big gestures—it's often found in small, daily acts of kindness and support. Those

moments of quiet service have become an important part of how I try to follow the Savior's example.

Q. How do you use your skills and knowledge to uplift others or make a meaningful impact in your community or field?

A. One of the biggest challenges in most projects is communication. Because of my background in science, engineering, and project management, I've often been able to help bridge the communication gap between different teams and disciplines. Creating understanding and alignment among people with diverse perspectives has been one of the most rewarding parts of my work.

As I've gained more experience over the years, I've realized that those experiences—both the successes and the mistakes—can be valuable to others. I try to share what I've learned so that others can build on what worked well and avoid some of the pitfalls I've encountered.

Perhaps most importantly, I'm learning the value of patience. Allowing others the space to make mistakes and then being there to support and encourage them afterward is often one of the best ways to help people grow. That's often how I strive to make a meaningful impact—by helping others learn, recover, and move forward with greater confidence.

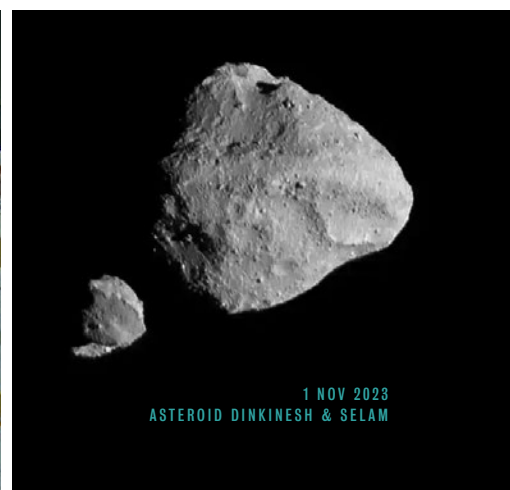
Q. Is there a moment or project that stands out as especially meaningful in terms of helping others or making a difference?

A. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working on some of the most exciting space missions imaginable: projects studying the most energetic explosions in the universe since the Big Bang, exploring Jupiter's Trojan asteroids (thought to be pristine remnants from the early solar system), and managing a spacecraft designed to capture and move other satellites into new orbits. But despite those thrilling scientific experiences, the most meaningful moment of my career involved mentoring a graduate student.

Several years ago, a student who had faced significant challenges in another program came into my office and



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asked if she could complete a dissertation under my supervision. I agreed, and over time, as we worked together, I watched her confidence and enthusiasm for research return. One of my favorite memories was the day she walked into my office and, with genuine confidence, outlined her ideas for how we should proceed with a challenging part of our research. It was a clear sign of how far she had come. She has gone on to complete her PhD, teach at a university, and make important scientific contributions.

I take no credit for her success. She was and is a brilliant scientist. I simply had the opportunity to offer support and encouragement along the way. Seeing her confidence grow and watching her thrive has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

Q. How has your faith influenced your approach to learning, problem-solving, or leadership in your field?

A. You may have heard the saying “Work as if everything depends on you and pray as if everything depends on God.” I’m trying to live by that principle, though I still have a lot to learn. When I face a problem, I do my best to solve it, but I’ve found that the most successful outcomes come when I also rely on Heavenly Father. Learning to trust Him and His timing is a continual process, one I am still growing in.

My faith also shapes how I try to lead. Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–44 teaches that the Lord’s way of leading is the best approach:

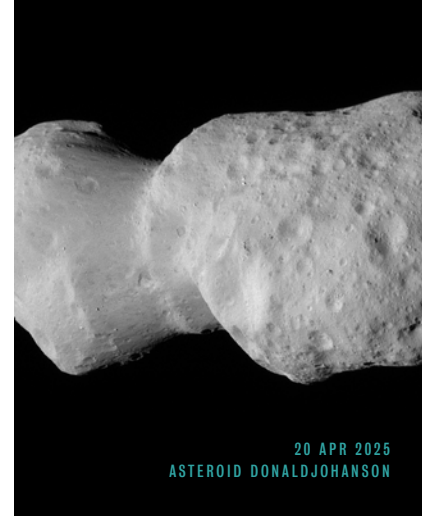
No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned;

By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile—

Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy;

That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.

I’ve seen the difference between the Lord’s way and the world’s way of leading, and I know I have a long way to go before I consistently lead in the Lord’s way. But I strive to follow His example in my work, research, and Church service, learning from my successes and failures alike and depending on God to guide me along the way.



NASA/KEVIN O'CONNELL AND BOB LAUSTERER

NASA/GODDARD/SWRI/JOHN'S HOPKINS APL/NORRLAB

“In the life of a disciple of Christ, I believe there should be no . . . compartmentalization between the different facets of life: home, church, work, and so on.”

Q. What does it mean to be a disciple-scholar, and how do you strive to embody that in your daily life?

A. I have learned that the ultimate source of truth is God. Truth is truth—or fact is fact—and there is no relative truth. As I continue to learn, whether in science or any other field, I sometimes encounter ideas that don’t immediately seem to align with gospel principles. In those moments, I’ve learned to be patient and exercise faith. Over time, either my understanding of a scientific principle may evolve, or I may gain a deeper understanding of the gospel principle that harmonizes with that scientific truth.

For disciple-scholars, continual study, research, the scriptures, the words of living prophets, and personal revelation are invaluable tools. I strive to use these resources to guide my learning, decision-making, and daily life, seeking both knowledge and understanding while staying rooted in Christ.

Q. Have you found ways to integrate spiritual values with scientific or technical work?

A. In the life of a disciple of Christ, I believe there should be no separation or compartmentalization between the different facets of life: home, church, work, and so on. I try to live consistently across all these areas, even though I am imperfect in each of them. I strive to apply the principle expressed by Karl G. Maeser: “Be yourself, but always your better self.”¹ In practice, that means approaching my work with integrity, diligence, and care for others, seeking to reflect Christlike values in every interaction, decision, and project.

Q. What are you most excited about in your field right now, and how do you hope to contribute moving forward?

A. From an astrophysics perspective, forthcoming missions such as Ultraviolet Explorer (UVEX), IceCube-Gen2,

and Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (LISA), along with conceptual missions like Advanced X-Ray Imaging Satellite (AXIS), Transient High-Energy Sky and Early Universe Surveyor (THESEUS), and Shock Interaction/Breakout Explorer (SIBEX), are expected to advance the field of time-domain and multi-messenger astronomy (TDAMM). These missions will enable discoveries ranging from the earliest galaxies and explosive transients to high-energy neutrino sources, supermassive black hole mergers, and detailed imaging of x-ray phenomena while advancing multi-messenger astrophysics and our understanding of fundamental physics. Since many of these missions may not be realized until after I retire, I hope to continue contributing by helping funding agencies and organizations recognize the importance of supporting these scientific endeavors.

From an engineering perspective, there is a fundamental shift underway in how space projects are conducted. Historically dominated by government programs, the sector is now seeing increasing commercial involvement, bringing exciting new technologies and approaches. However, since experience and lessons learned in space missions are held by a relatively small community, I hope that organizations like the Space Dynamics Laboratory can help bridge the gap, fostering continued growth and opportunities in the space sector. [fr](#)

NOTE

1. Karl G. Maeser, quoted in N. L. Nelson, “Dr. Maeser’s Legacy to the Church Schools,” Brigham Young University Quarterly 1, no. 4 (February 1, 1906): 14. Also quoted in “Sayings of Dr. Karl G. Maeser,” Dr. Karl G. Maeser Memorial, special edition of Brigham Young University Quarterly 3, no. 3 (February 1, 1907); “Dr. Karl G. Maeser—Some of His Sentence Sermons,” Millennial Star 70, no. 29 (July 16, 1908): 452; and “Sayings of Dr. Karl G. Maeser,” Young Woman’s Journal 23, no. 7 (July 1912): 366.

JOHN FJELDSTED BUILDING BONDS BETWEEN PEOPLE & TECHNOLOGY



THE DEPARTMENT OF
**CHEMISTRY &
BIOCHEMISTRY**



Catching Hold of His Dreams

After high school, Fjeldsted attended Brigham Young University, where he majored in chemistry. Pausing his studies to serve a two-year mission in Switzerland, Austria, and Germany shaped his academic journey, influenced his worldview, and deepened his faith.

Returning to BYU, he hoped for a bit of divine intervention in his personal life as well. A young woman he had known in Southern California, Trudy, was also attending BYU. “I thought, ‘Wouldn’t it be great if Trudy, who was starting at BYU as a freshman, ended up in my ward?’ The Lord’s answer to my prayer was ‘You do the Lord’s work, and He’ll do yours,’” he says. “Some things got changed, and she did end up in my ward.” Two years later, they were married in the Mesa Arizona Temple—beginning a partnership that would sustain them through decades of professional and personal adventures.

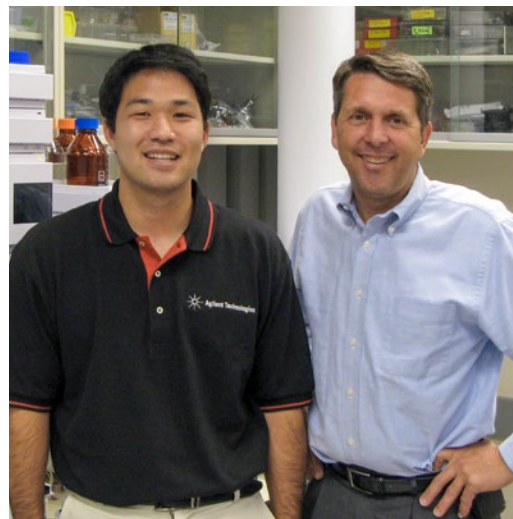
As Fjeldsted neared the end of his PhD program at BYU, he was already collaborating with the mass spectrometry division at Hewlett-Packard (HP). That connection proved pivotal. “If you have an internship or a collaboration, doors open that otherwise wouldn’t,” he says. In 1984, Fjeldsted joined HP in the Bay Area, fulfilling a dream he’d had for years. “HP was the pinnacle,” he says. “The culture was incredible—diverse, innovative, and collaborative. There was a marriage of disciplines: electronics, analytical measurements, and computing. You needed all of these together to do great analytical instrumentation.”

Long before he led global scientific programs and shaped the future of analytical instrumentation, John C. Fjeldsted (BA '80, PhD '85) was a young chemistry student captivated by flashing lights on a mass spectrometer in BYU's Eyring Science Center.

For him, this field was never just a career. It was a calling. “I always dreamed of working in analytical instrumentation,” he says. “It’s a wonderful fusion, uniting chemistry and the challenges it tackles with the science and technology that make those analyses possible.”

Fjeldsted’s dream began during his upbringing in Southern California. Fascination with science runs in his family. His great-grandfather was involved in the development of incandescent lighting in Germany in the 1880s. His grandfather taught chemistry and physics, and his father studied electrical engineering after World War II. “I remember visiting my grandfather’s chemistry department and collecting glassware and chemicals,” Fjeldsted recalls. “This led to my experiments. Those moments planted the seeds.”

LEFT Fjeldsted teaches CHEM 522. RIGHT Fjeldsted mentors intern Nate Itoga at Agilent Technologies.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN FJELDSTED

His first assignment was in HP’s mass spectrometry (MS) division, developing a new generation of bench-top gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) systems. These systems became the foundation for a family of instruments that, remarkably, still dominate the market forty years later. “That series of mass spectrometers represents the largest installed base worldwide,” Fjeldsted says. “To have been part of its scientific initiation is deeply gratifying.”

Connection and Collaboration

In 1999, the analytical instrumentation portion of HP became part of a new company: Agilent Technologies. Over the next decade, he rose through the ranks, leading international joint development efforts in ion-trap liquid chromatography/mass spectrometer (LC/MS) instrumentation and the introduction of time-of-flight mass, triple-quadrupole, and quadrupole time-of-flight mass spectrometers. He later became head of Agilent’s LC/MS research and development department and eventually the vice president and general manager of the LC/MS business.

With that role came global responsibility and new lessons. “Operating at various levels taught me that success isn’t just about technical expertise,” he explains. “It’s about managing upward, understanding strategy, and aligning with organizational goals.” Fjeldsted is candid about the challenges of leadership. “I realized that my ability to manage up to the senior vice president level had reached its limit,” he says.

Yet even as he navigated corporate complexities, Fjeldsted remained committed to what had guided him from the start: collaboration in problem-solving, first-principles thinking in science, and perspective in leadership. Regarding that perspective, he explains, “It goes beyond having warm feelings for people. It’s about seeing the world through their eyes. Consider circumstances from their perspective, not just your own.”

After stepping away from executive management, Fjeldsted took on responsibility for a global program that allowed him to return to his scientific roots while leveraging his leadership experience. “It was the perfect fusion of everything I love—technical insight and collaboration,” he says. The program connected him with scientists



across the globe, bringing cutting-edge technology into academic labs and fostering partnerships with graduate students and postdocs. “We published together, we ran workshops and conferences, and together we advanced the field,” he recalls. “It was incredibly rewarding.” For his contributions as a scientific ambassador, Fjeldsted was honored with the title of Agilent Distinguished Scientist—the first to be so recognized at Agilent.

Anchored in Faith and Family

Through all the professional milestones, Fjeldsted’s personal life remained anchored in faith and family. He and Trudy raised four children while balancing the demands of a high-powered career. Church service was a constant—he served as a Scoutmaster, Young Men president, and bishop, as well as in various other leadership roles. “Serving in Scouting and Young Men was especially meaningful,” he says. “Having benefited from the programs as a youth, it was a privilege to give back.”

In July 2024, Fjeldsted and his wife embarked on a new chapter: a full-time mission in the Alpine German-Speaking Mission, serving as member and leader support missionaries. Having spent much of his professional career collaborating with fellow scientists and engineers in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, Fjeldsted was grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve people he has grown to love and appreciate over a lifetime. This mission assignment was a dream come true. He says, “It feels like coming full circle.”

Fjeldsted remains active in the scientific community, consulting and serving on the advisory board for BYU’s Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry. “Looking back,” he reflects, “it’s not just about the instruments we built or the papers we published. It’s about the relationships, the shared discoveries, and the chance to make a difference.”

“It goes beyond having warm feelings for people.
It’s about seeing the world through their eyes.”

JARED RUTTER

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY AND DEDICATION



THE DEPARTMENT OF
**CHEMISTRY &
BIOCHEMISTRY**



When Jared P. Rutter (BS '96) graduated from BYU, he had no idea just how far his curiosity would take him. Today, he is a world-class biochemist, a professor at the University of Utah School of Medicine, and a pioneer in biomedical research.

Shortly after graduation, Rutter and his wife, Deena, packed all their belongings and moved to Dallas, Texas, where he began a PhD program at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. Over the next seven years, Rutter balanced the demands of study and research with the joys and challenges of family life. Three sons joined the family during that time, and Rutter completed his doctorate in the lab of Steven McKnight, a scientist who would later receive the prestigious Lasker Prize. Rutter was then named a Sara and Frank McKnight Independent Fellow of Biochemistry; this highly competitive position allowed him to pursue independent research early in his career.

In 2003, Rutter and his family moved to Salt Lake City, where he accepted a faculty position in the Department of Biochemistry at the University of Utah School of Medicine. In the ensuing twenty-three years, Rutter became a leader in his field, a mentor to countless students, and an innovator whose work could one day transform human health. Along the way, the Rutter family grew again with the arrival of a daughter. Today, Rutter's four children are grown, three are married, and three have attended BYU.

Power of Education

Rutter's fascination with biology began early, but it wasn't until his studies at BYU that he saw science as a viable career path. "I didn't really view it as an option until after my first year," he recalls. Inspired by exceptional

professors and hands-on research opportunities, Rutter changed his major to molecular biology in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department. "Bill Bradshaw stands out as someone who helped me realize I could have a career as a scientist," Rutter says. "He gave me the chance to work in his lab and gain practical experience."

That experience and the mentorship that came with it set Rutter on a course that would define his life's work. It also gave him a deep appreciation for the power of education and the role of dedicated teachers in shaping futures.

Looking back, Rutter credits BYU with giving him more than just academic knowledge. "I received an excellent education at BYU, probably more than I realized until I went away to graduate school and found that I was quite well prepared," he says. "I was intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and practically prepared to take on the challenges of moving to a new place to join a PhD program."

"Making my family and faith my highest priorities has . . . made me a better scientist."

That preparation served him well then and has continued to benefit him through decades of research, teaching, and leadership.

Chasing the Peak

"The purpose of the research in my lab is to understand how life works and then use that understanding to improve human health," Rutter says. "Most of my day-to-day work is focused on the 'understanding' part of that, but I have had several opportunities to contribute to efforts to improve human health through the discovery of new therapeutics." His research has led him to cofound multiple therapeutics companies, three of which have advanced investigational medicines into clinical trials.

For Rutter, the ultimate goal is clear. "The defining moment of my career hasn't happened yet," he says. "It will be when one of the investigational drugs that we have developed is conclusively demonstrated to improve life for patients. That is the top of the mountain that my colleagues and I are climbing, and it would make the hard work, stress, anxiety, and time away from home all worth it." Until that day comes, Rutter finds meaning in smaller victories, moments when he can offer peace,



confidence, insight, or enlightenment to a struggling colleague. "These interactions are definitely those that I prize the most," he says.

He also hopes current students will embrace the opportunities of the present moment. "There are incredibly exciting developments in the technologies that we can use to understand the natural world," Rutter says. "We are in a golden age of science in many ways. I hope that the support for scientific discovery and implementation continues as strong as it has been for decades in our country so that these discoveries can be brought to bear on human health."

A Firm Foundation

Regardless of the challenges in his scientific work, Rutter finds strength in faith and family. "My faith is an important foundation of all that I do and who I am," he says. "So, in some ways, it is hard to assess what role it plays because it's hard to imagine my life without it. My faith and my family form the bedrock of my life and make it relatively easy to deal with the ups and downs of my career and day-to-day life."

Faith also provides a moral compass. "I don't ever have to think about whether or not to compromise my ethics or principles because, as a result of my commitment to my faith, I am also committed strongly to those ethics," Rutter explains. He strives to be the best scientist he can be while ensuring that his scholarship never overshadows his discipleship. In the end, placing his values first has strengthened him in each area of his life. He says, "Making my family and faith my highest priorities has definitely made me a better scientist, professor, and mentor." **FR**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JARED RUTTER

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DAN DELOREY

FROM BYU TO BUILDING THE FUTURE OF DATA



THE DEPARTMENT OF
**COMPUTER
SCIENCE**



From the moment he first encountered a computer at age seven, Daniel P. Delorey (BS '03, MS '07) knew what he wanted to do with his life. “Working in computing was always my one and only career goal,” he says. “It never felt like a conscious choice. It was just what I was always going to do.” That early fascination with technology set him on a path that would take him from programming simple graphics instead of attending recess to building some of the largest-scale data systems in the world. “It was quite an evolution,” he says. Along the way, he has remained deeply committed to his faith, his family, and his desire to help others succeed.

Delorey earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in computer science and started graduate work for a PhD at Brigham Young University. While in Provo, he also met his wife, Natalie, and learned to balance professional ambition with spiritual growth. He says, “Being able to develop my professional skills in tandem with my testimony laid the foundation for a balanced career where I

could pursue personal career development along with building a family and serving in the Church.”

Establishing that balance early on made all the difference. Over the years, he has coached youth sports, participated in service projects with the Rotary Club and other community groups, and held various Church callings. He currently teaches Sunday School to eleven- and twelve-year-olds. But above all, he’s a proud father of four: Lexi (BYU graduate, computer science), Abby (BYU student, social science teaching), Ellie (BYU student, dance education K-12 pre-major), and Andrew (high school sophomore). “For me, focusing on family first, church second, and work third has led to great success,” he says.

Building the Future

In August 2008, Delorey left BYU for a full-time role at Google in Kirkland, Washington. At the time, he had completed his coursework and qualifying exams and was

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAN DELOREY



RIGHT Delorey’s daughters Abby (left) and Lexi (center) join him during Take Your Child to Work Day at Google in 2009.

midway through his dissertation. He was now embarking on a career that would help redefine the future of data.

His first role at Google focused on ad optimization, helping advertisers improve targeting through data analysis and automated suggestions. Two years later, he joined an internal infrastructure team building a large-scale data processing system code-named Dremel—the foundation for BigQuery, Google’s web-scale public cloud SQL platform. Today, BigQuery is a multi-billion-dollar business and a cornerstone of modern analytics.

During his twelve years at Google, Delorey served as engineer, manager, and director; authored academic papers; and led initiatives that shaped the frontier of large-scale data processing. He contributed to research that advanced the field of cloud computing, coauthoring papers—including one with fellow BYU alumnus Matt Tolton—on tree-structured querying and scalable data systems.

In 2021, Delorey joined SoFi as vice president of data. His teams were responsible for data infrastructure and data analytics. He later moved to Moloco, an applied machine learning startup, as senior director of infrastructure, overseeing AI-driven real-time bidding systems for mobile advertising. Last year, he transitioned to Dryden Technology Group, where he is now a partner, working alongside his former BYU PhD advisor Chuck Knutson and former lab mate Jonathan Krein.

At Dryden, Delorey provides expert witnessing services for intellectual property disputes and expert consulting services for mergers, acquisitions, and company valuations. He and his partners are also launching a training company focused on technical learning and development. “Helping others develop is one of the most fun and rewarding aspects of my career,” he says.

“Being able to develop my professional skills in tandem with my testimony laid the foundation for a balanced career . . . along with building a family and serving in the Church.”

Paving the Way

As AI reshapes society, Delorey is excited—and cautious. “I love seeing technology reach more people as the barriers to engagement are being lowered,” he says. “At the same time, I think there are risks that require knowledgeable people with strong communication skills and deep understanding of the technology to help society understand our options so we can collectively choose an optimistic path forward.” Through his work at Dryden, he hopes to play a role in steering that future.

“[My colleagues and I] are blessed to be engaged as expert witnesses in some of the largest and most important legal cases in the evolving field of generative AI,” he says. “This technology has the potential for great positive impact if we manage to steer the ship correctly and protect intellectual property rights while enabling rapid development.”

Delorey also seeks to make a difference through mentorship and training. “I have spent significant effort to develop and present training courses to help those I manage become better engineers and coworkers,” he says.

Delorey’s own mentors at BYU shaped not only his technical foundation but his approach to leadership.

He recalls professors who influenced his path: Mike D. Jones, who hired him as an undergraduate researcher and helped him publish his first academic paper; Chuck Knutson, who shifted his lab’s focus to support Delorey’s

“All truth is inspiring to me. I’ve found technical ideas from reading the scriptures and spiritual insights from reading technical books.”

interests; and Tony Martinez, who supported Delorey’s leadership roles as a graduate student.

And then there was his mentor Chris Monson, whose referral helped shape Delorey’s career. “I feel I got my chance at Google in large part thanks to Chris Monson,” he explains. “Because of that, beginning in February 2009, six months after I started at Google, I began leading on-campus recruiting at BYU. At the time, Google did not recruit from the technical colleges or BYU. We grew BYU’s profile through the success of our semesterly recruiting trips, to the point that for a few years BYU became one of Google’s targeted schools.”

He continued this pattern at SoFi and Moloco, helping countless students launch careers in tech. “It felt good to pay forward what Chris did for me,” he says. Now, Delorey regularly returns to BYU to speak in computer science classes—most recently on legal issues involving generative AI—and continues to champion BYU students in tech.

Leading with Light

Delorey’s approach to leadership and problem-solving is deeply influenced by his faith. “I seek the guidance of

the Spirit in all that I do,” he says. “I’ve received clear impressions and directions about where to dedicate my efforts, where to cut back, and how to balance the many calls on my time.”

For him, being a disciple-scholar means integrating spiritual and technical skills seamlessly. “I don’t separate the facets of my life along strict boundaries,” he says. “I’m a disciple at work, and I’m an engineer at home and at church. I bring all the skills I’ve developed, technical and spiritual, to bear on all my decisions and activities.” He believes God practices engineering, and he sees prayer and pondering as essential tools for solving both technical and personal challenges. “All truth is inspiring to me,” Delorey says. “I’ve found technical ideas from reading the scriptures and spiritual insights from reading technical books.”

He encourages the next generation to involve the Lord from the very beginning: “Look for ways to give back and pay forward what you got from BYU. And let the Lord guide your choices. Start with a prayer whenever you can. Thank the Lord for His goodness and trust in His timing.” ■



LEFT Delorey interns with Google in 2007 in Kirkland, Washington.



NEHA RUNGTA



THE DEPARTMENT OF
**COMPUTER
SCIENCE**



FROM BYU ROOTS TO AWS LEADERSHIP

When Neha S. Rungta (BS '04, MS '06, PhD '09) reflects on what has shaped her life and career, she returns to a simple idea she carried from Provo into the wider world: “Enter to learn; go forth to serve.” For her, this BYU motto captures not only who people become but how they choose to use their education, their privilege, their means, and ultimately their lives. It has served as her compass at every crossroads—academic, professional, and personal.

Today, as director of applied science at Amazon Web Services (AWS) Identity, Rungta impacts billions of users through her work. Behind the scenes, her team powers authorization decisions trillions of times per day with reliability and rigor.

Rungta's career path began at Brigham Young University, where she spent eight years earning her bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees in computer science, years she describes as profoundly formative. She chose to attend BYU because it combined strong academics with a values-driven environment. “I wanted a place where technical excellence and personal integrity were both emphasized,” Rungta says. “BYU provided rigorous training in computer science while also encouraging reflection in purpose, ethics, and service.”

While computing grounded her technically, other disciplines shaped how she learned to see the world. Conversations with professors in art history and sociology helped her develop a lasting fascination with people:

what drives them, what motivates them, and how context shapes behavior. That perspective, she notes, is essential when leading large organizations. “Technology may be built on logic, but leadership depends on understanding humans,” she says.

At BYU, Rungta's influence extended beyond the classroom. In the lab, she focused on symbolic execution, program analysis, and automated reasoning, developing tools to rigorously define what software can and cannot do. Her work then, as it is now, was driven by real-world consequence: not just hoping systems will behave correctly but building them so failure isn't possible. As a student, she also founded the BYU Women in Computer Science (WICS) club and served as its president, helping build a community that continues to thrive today.

Making Real Guarantees

Rungta's passion for real-world impact led her to NASA Ames Research Center after BYU. “I joined NASA because I was drawn to problems where correctness truly matters, systems where failure isn't an option,” Rungta says. At NASA Ames, she worked on safety-critical software used in aerospace and aviation, an environment that demanded rigor, careful reasoning about edge cases, and a deep sense of responsibility. “It was an ideal place to apply computer science to problems with real-world consequences,” she says.

From NASA, Rungta moved into product leadership at AWS, aiming to apply the same level of rigor at an unprecedented scale. “Cloud infrastructure powers businesses,



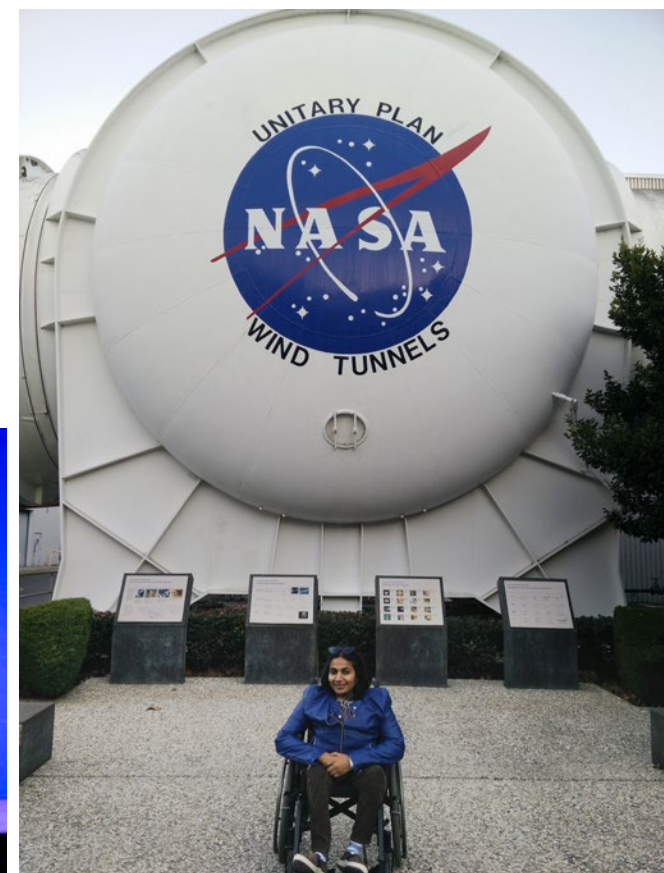
PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEHA RUNGTA

governments, and individuals worldwide, and I wanted to help provide the highest levels of assurance that systems behave as intended,” she says. “AWS offered the opportunity to turn research ideas into production systems that deliver strong, provable guarantees and protect millions of customers every day.”

At AWS, her team builds technologies that answer foundational security questions: “Who is allowed to do what? Can we be absolutely sure?” As she explains, “When a person or system tries to access data in the cloud, our systems determine whether that action should be allowed or denied. We design these systems to be not just tested but *provably correct*, using mathematics to prove that the rules behave exactly as intended, even in complex scenarios humans might overlook.” Their work strengthens the trustworthiness of cloud security worldwide.

Rungta doesn't view this work as merely a job. She sees it as service through impact. “My work helps protect

“Pushing oneself may be uncomfortable, but it unlocks discovery.”



customers who may never know my name, such as small businesses, nonprofits, hospitals, and individuals who rely on cloud systems being secure and fair,” she says. “Making complex systems safer for everyone is a form of service I take seriously.”

Underlying her technical leadership is a clear philosophy of growth. Rungta believes the right path is often the harder one, even when popular culture suggests progress should be easy. Discomfort, she argues, is a signal of growth. “Pushing oneself may be uncomfortable, but it unlocks discovery—revealing capabilities and possibilities that might otherwise remain unknown,” she says.

Mentoring with a Gentle Nudge

Beyond her technical achievements, Rungta is a dedicated mentor who actively supports and inspires students. She spends significant time mentoring early-career engineers and scientists, helping them grow technically, navigate leadership paths, and build confidence in high-stakes environments. Mentorship is woven into how she builds teams and products, emphasizing clear thinking, responsibility, and long-term impact.

As a mentor, she encourages curiosity and a willingness to question the status quo, especially at a moment she views as a historic inflection point. Just as the printing press, the Industrial Revolution, and electricity reshaped society, she believes generative AI will drive sweeping technological, economic, and social change—only faster. This generation, she notes, will stand at the inception point, deciding whether to be spectators or drivers of that change. “Technology itself is neither good nor bad,” she says. “What matters is how people choose to shape and govern it.”

Rungta also offers rising professionals a gentle reminder: “Don't over-script life.” Early in her own journey, undergraduate research exposed her to the joy of discovery: the process of understanding why things work or don't. Computer science hadn't always been part of her life plan; at twelve, she imagined becoming a doctor. Remaining open to new experiences led her instead to computer science and, eventually, to a career at the intersection of research, product, and service. “Curiosity,” she suggests, “is not only a research virtue but a career strategy.”

The invitation Rungta extends to students and colleagues mirrors her approach to her own path: stay curious, ask hard questions, choose growth over comfort, and let service be the throughline. ■

TYSON PERKES



A GEOLOGIST'S PATH OF FAITH AND SERVICE IN ACTION



THE DEPARTMENT OF
GEOLOGICAL
SCIENCES



“Working and providing for your family is a spiritual pursuit.”

When Chevron offered Tyson L. Perkes (MS '10) a position in Covington, a suburb of New Orleans, he and his wife, Kendyl, took a leap of faith. “It was overwhelming and a little scary,” Perkes says, “but I knew Chevron was the company I wanted to work for.” That decision launched a career that has spanned multiple states, more than a decade, and some of the most exciting developments in petroleum geology.

After four years in Louisiana, Perkes moved to Houston to join Chevron's research and development (R&D) division, where he filled a role typically reserved for someone with a doctorate. He spent nine years immersed in stratigraphy, the subdiscipline he had studied at BYU. “Getting to work with world-renowned experts in my field will be a highlight of my career,” he says. “I always felt that my educational background at BYU gave me all the tools I needed to succeed.” Today, Perkes is helping develop oil fields in the Permian Basin of west Texas.

Perkes's passion for geology began in high school and solidified during his undergraduate studies at BYU-Idaho, when a professor encouraged him to interview with oil companies. That led to an internship with Oxy (Occidental Petroleum Corporation) and the realization that petroleum geology offered the perfect combination of scientific inquiry and financial stability. During

Perkes's graduate studies at BYU, his advisor, Tom Morris, played a pivotal role in nurturing that passion. “Doc Morris instilled a passion and excitement in me about the industry and the type of scientific work I would get to do,” Perkes says. “He was everything you would want as a grad school advisor. He was constantly teaching and mentoring his students. He made grad school fun.”

Morris wasn't the only one who helped Perkes along the way. “I was blessed with excellent professors, great fellow students, and supportive alumni,” he says. One of those alumni, Gary Chapman, was a Chevron recruiter and a key reason Perkes chose the company. “Having alumni in my network was a blessing in my early career,” Perkes says. He appreciates that BYU continues to support students pursuing careers in the oil industry, even as other geology departments shift their focus.

Faith and Humility in Action

Outside of work, Perkes and his wife are raising four children. Their first child, Audrey, was born in Provo, followed by Troy and Kenlee (who passed away as a baby) in Covington, then Jackson and Ethan in Houston. Perkes and Kendyl find joy in watching them compete in sports and in traveling together as a family. “Family and the gospel come first. Careers can ebb and flow, but family relations are more delicate. You only have your kids at a given stage in their childhood once,” Perkes says.

Perkes sees his professional work as an extension of his spiritual values. “Working and providing for your family is a spiritual pursuit,” he says. “I focus on working

hard, being honest, and treating others with respect.”

The concept of being a disciple-scholar is deeply personal for Perkes. His father and grandfather were both scientists and faithful Church members. “They often spoke of their academic fields in a gospel light,” he says. Perkes strives to do the same, seeing God's hand in His creations and sharing that perspective openly with his children and colleagues. “Our children know we have testimonies and do our best to live the gospel,” he says. “Our friends and neighbors also know that we believe in our church and that it is a priority.”

In his professional life, Perkes applies a principle taught by Morris: “Be humble enough to consider that you are wrong.” This mindset has helped him navigate the uncertainties of petroleum geology, where predictions about drilling outcomes can be hit or miss. “Too often, people are convinced they have all the answers,” he says. “Doc's advice has helped me consider others' viewpoints and expertise, which has helped me come to better decisions as a result.”

He also strives to exhibit kindness. “Treating people well is the most important thing you can do to make a difference in your career and community,” he says. “People work harder for managers who treat them well. People are more likely to serve those who show them respect.”

Paying It Forward

One of Perkes's most meaningful professional experiences came during his time in Chevron's R&D division, where he was mentored by industry experts and led parts

of significant research projects. Presenting their findings at professional meetings helped him grow in confidence and skill. “I am grateful to a good mentor, Morgan Sullivan, who gave me the chance to lead and also present our work,” he says. “Morgan is an industry-renowned expert, but he gets more satisfaction in facilitating his mentees' success than he does in receiving accolades for himself. As I have moved into more mentoring roles, I have tried to remember that example and what it meant to me.”

Perkes says his favorite days at work are those when he gets to teach a class or mentor an intern or new hire. “The single most important factor to whatever professional success I have had has been having fantastic mentors throughout my career. I would love to be able to assist early-career geologists in a similar manner if I can.”

He adds, “Now is a very interesting time to be a petroleum geologist. Remaining oil prospects are becoming more geologically complex. Paradoxically, it seems old-school geology skills are becoming more important and leading to more job stability. It is often said that the best geologists are those who have seen the most rocks, and I think that is becoming increasingly true.” Perkes credits BYU with giving him a strong foundation in fieldwork. “Studying at BYU gave me an advantage because students get to spend a lot of time looking at world-class outcrops that geologists travel from all over the world to see. I am grateful that the professors dedicated so much time outside normal school hours to take us to all these locations.”

Sam Hudson, a professor in BYU's Department of Geological Sciences, describes Perkes as “a perfect example of what alumni from our department represent.” Hudson adds, “He is passionate about BYU, and he is especially passionate about the Department of Geological Sciences.”

Perkes's fifteen-year career at Chevron speaks volumes about his expertise and dedication. But his commitment to supporting the next generation of geologists says even more about his character. “He has gone above and beyond to mentor and guide our students,” Hudson says. “His journey is a testament to the power of mentorship, humility, and living one's values—both in the lab and at home.” ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TYSON PERKES

ROBERT TURLEY

INVESTING IN ETERNAL PRINCIPLES



THE DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS

When Robert S. Turley (BA '03) first visited Brigham Young University as a high school senior, a single term captured his attention: disciple-scholar. Turley explains, “The dean of the honors program, Paul Cox, organized a lecture series on becoming a disciple-scholar. . . . It was so inspiring, thinking deeply about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ while pursuing learning.” In particular, Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s speech “The Disciple-Scholar” in the series deeply influenced Turley, transforming his perception of education from a checklist into a calling.

“We truly believe that part of our purpose on earth is to learn,” Turley says. “There are very few things as holy as trying to understand eternal principles.” So, after earning his degree in mathematics and economics from BYU, he continued learning: He received an MBA from New York University and an AM and PhD in business economics from Harvard.

Those years taught him a perspective that continues to shape his decisions. “All the most important things are the things that stretch out into the eternities or the long term,” he says. “That’s true in life, and it’s true in investing.”

Charting New Waters

Today, Turley serves as vice president and head of Portfolio Strategy at Dodge & Cox, an investment firm managing more than \$450 billion. His responsibilities include comanaging the firm’s Balanced Fund and Emerging Markets Stock Fund. His leadership helped earn Morningstar’s recent upgrade of the firm’s emerging markets stock

strategy from Bronze to Silver, a recognition of the team’s disciplined approach to investing.

Much of Turley’s current work focuses on the cutting edge of financial technology. “A disproportionate amount of our time right now is spent on how we can harness the amazing benefits of the latest artificial intelligence models in ways that complement, not just purely substitute for, the research we’re doing at Dodge & Cox,” he says.

As an investment firm, Dodge & Cox relies on deep analysis of companies and markets. AI offers powerful tools to accelerate that process, but it also introduces new challenges. “We’re working really hard to see how we can learn faster and more deeply . . . with the aid of these great tools and models,” Turley says. “At the same time, we have to control for ways they could mislead us.”

“All the most important things . . . stretch out into the eternities or the long term. That’s true in life, and it’s true in investing.”

Turley sees this as a challenge not just for his firm but for industries worldwide. “I think people across a variety of fields and companies are grappling with this,” he says. “But it’s a privilege for me to lead the team at Dodge & Cox that has been tasked with driving a lot of our efforts with artificial intelligence.”

A Principled Professional

Turley insists that technical expertise alone doesn’t drive success. When asked what skill BYU students should prioritize, Turley doesn’t hesitate: “No matter what career path you take, there’s a desperate need for people who are utterly reliable,” he says. “If you’re the kind of person who gets things done, does them right, and does them with love, you’ll have amazing career opportunities and feel great about your contributions.”

Turley emphasizes that reliability isn’t just about meeting deadlines; it’s about building trust. He adds, “Of course, you can develop that in the classroom by doing great coursework, but you also have other opportunities at BYU to develop the same skills—being the kind of person who is reliable and shows great care for other people.”

As a leader, he often asks himself, “What are the ways that you can inspire people to be technically creative and solve great problems?” The answer, he believes, lies in principles that transcend business. “It’s typically not about simple rewards or punishments,” Turley says. “That’s a common mistake in the business world—thinking if you just pay someone more, they’ll work harder or be more creative.”

Instead, he says, “What I’ve seen is that people respond really well to the principles of love and appreciation, prin-

ciples of Christlike leadership. That’s what causes people to be truly creative, inspired, and willing to go the extra mile.”

For Turley, these principles aren’t abstract; they’re practical. They create environments where innovation thrives and teams tackle problems with energy and purpose. “When people feel valued and trusted, they bring their best ideas forward,” he says.

Chasing Away Darkness

Turley’s belief that leadership is about stewardship, not status, informs more than his professional work. It also guides his service as president of the San Francisco California Stake and as board secretary of the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation. “Whether you’re leading a team, serving in your community, or raising a family, those principles endure,” he says.

When Turley was called as second counselor in the San Francisco California Stake presidency, Elder Kim B. Clark, then commissioner of the Church Educational System, extended the calling and offered training centered on Doctrine and Covenants 50. “He talked about light and how important that was and what light means,” Turley says. “He emphasized our responsibility, as verse 25 says, to ‘chase darkness’ away. That’s something I feel is a key part of who I aspire to be and why our family is in San Francisco.”

For Turley, that charge goes beyond the words he and his family share with others. He says, “I hope that in everything we do—professionally and personally, in schools and at work—we’re not hiding our light but letting it shine through our love and our attempts to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT TURLEY





THE DEPARTMENT OF
**MATHEMATICS
EDUCATION**

ANDY GLAZE

ILLUMINATING LIVES THROUGH MATHEMATICS AND SERVICE



Since I was old enough to hold a job, I have consistently sought out either teaching positions or positions working with youth,” says Andrew R. Glaze (BA '04, MA '06). “In my university studies, I learned that I really enjoyed mathematics, so it seemed natural to become a math teacher.” After Glaze and his wife, Tiffini, both completed master’s degrees in mathematics education at BYU, he began his career in Utah as a high school math teacher.

After six years in the classroom, Glaze learned about a doctoral program in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in mathematics education and leadership offered through Utah State University. Initially, his goal was to enter higher education and teach preservice teachers.

“I remember having lunch with my dissertation advisor and her husband,” Glaze recalls. “Among other things, we discussed what I thought I would like to do after graduation. I remember being asked where my heart was—in higher education or in K-12? My passion is really with the youth.” Later, as Glaze reviewed his scholarly work with his advisor, she observed that his credentials were pointing him toward in-state work. Glaze agreed.

After earning his doctorate, Glaze became a mathematics coach in the Salt Lake City School District, a role that allowed him to use his leadership skills while staying close to the classroom. He also added an administrative license, recognizing opportunities to contribute meaningfully within the K-12 education system.

Reflecting on his career choice, Glaze says, “I discovered that I am one of those rare individuals who actually *loves*

teaching in the middle grades. Sometimes I muse that my ideal teaching assignment would be a seventh-grade pre-calculus course! It will never happen, but there it is.”

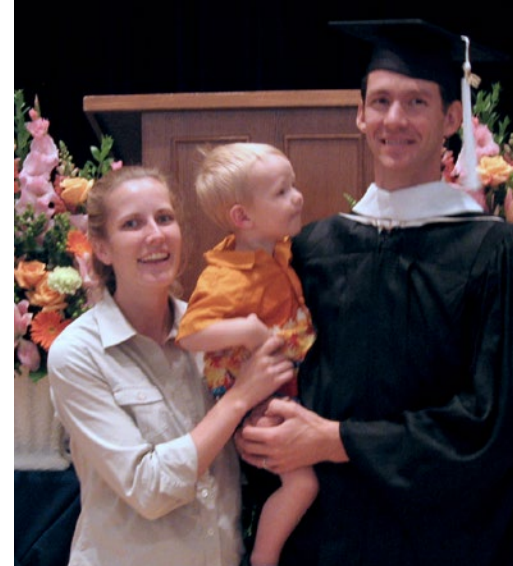
Teaching Children of Heavenly Parents

Glaze’s time at BYU shaped his approach to teaching. He remembers clearly his first semester in Blake Peterson’s geometry course. “It was the first time in my life that I experienced a mathematics class where we were encouraged to explore and make our own connections. We kept a swift pace, but I never felt like we were moving too fast for me to understand the material,” he says. “That class, more than any other, really laid the groundwork for how I continue to teach today.”

Another influential figure was Jacqueline Voyles, who taught Glaze’s methods courses. “I remember her sharing how she assisted one of her student teachers in resetting a classroom when behavior problems became so out of control that it became impossible for students to learn,” he says. “Nearly twenty years later, I was in precisely the same situation with a new teacher I coached. Fortunately, I had a play from Dr. Voyles’s playbook and knew exactly what to do.”

Glaze’s teaching methods are grounded in research, but his perspective is also deeply spiritual. “I try to never lose focus of the fact that everybody is a child of heavenly parents who love them very much,” he says. “When I am applying research-based practices, I am ultimately serving other children of our heavenly parents. Sometimes when I am really stumped about a particular challenge in my practice, I say a silent prayer and press forward.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDY GLAZE



Finding Ways to Serve

Just three months after Glaze started teaching, he and his wife welcomed their second child—and four more followed in the next six years. “When you have that many humans in the same household, there is rarely a quiet moment,” Glaze says. “Life is messy, and nothing goes perfectly, but we continue to serve in our church and in the community and everything else just seems to work out.”

His skills as a math educator often open doors for service. “I don’t do many sit-down sessions with students in my own community these days, but it’s not uncommon for me to get a text from a neighbor who needs quick help with a kid’s math homework,” he says. “I do a quick problem, snap a picture, and send it back with a short explanation. They always appreciate the help.”

Glaze found a particularly meaningful opportunity to serve in the Utah Council of Teachers of Mathematics (UCTM). After years of involvement, he stepped into leadership as the president just before the COVID-19 shutdown. “By the time we were out of the shutdown, we had not sponsored a conference in two and a half years,” he says. “Putting on a conference with a lot of board members

who had not participated in that work before took a lot of teamwork and effort, but we did it.”


That success sparked bigger changes. Glaze and his team shifted from a Friday/Saturday format to a two-day, midweek conference, creating what became the largest math teacher conference in the Western US outside California and Texas. By working with partners, they kept registration fees low to attract more teachers. “We even made a profit and were able to use that to fund classroom grants for our state’s teachers,” Glaze says.

UCTM also restructured its board to ensure regional representation, giving teachers across Utah a voice. Now the organization sends about \$10,000 annually to classrooms for math supplies, and some board members from that period are recognized as national leaders in math education.

“An Example of the Believers”

Glaze’s advice to current BYU students is rooted in scripture and confidence in their potential. “The Apostle Paul counseled Timothy, ‘Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity’ (1 Timothy 4:12),” Glaze says. “Like Timothy’s, your youthful example is precisely what the world needs right now.”

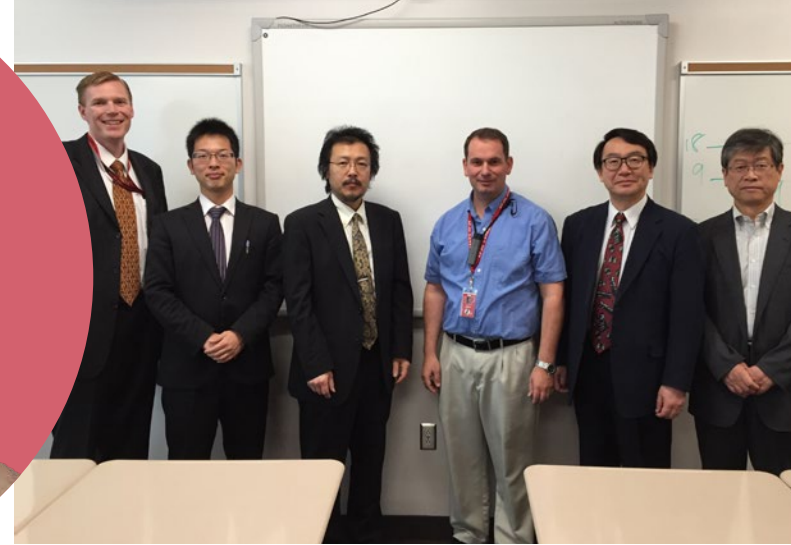
He urges students not to wait for experience before stepping up. “You are young, but you are so capable,” he says. “You have a top-notch education, but more importantly, you have the Spirit of Christ, and that is your superpower.”

Glaze believes sharing light doesn’t have to be complicated. “I feel like I’m sharing my light when I lift and serve others,” he says. “Most of the time it’s as simple as offering sincere compliments.” Glaze has found in his own work that when faith informs everyday learning and leadership, the impact reaches far beyond equations and lesson plans. It changes lives. 

“I try to never lose focus of the fact that everybody is a child of heavenly parents who love them very much.”

TRAVIS LEMON

GOING THE EXTRA MILE



ABOVE Math educators from Japan visit Lemon's classroom.

The aha moments and light bulbs I see go on in my classroom every day are a great reward," says Travis L. Lemon (BA '00, MA '10). "They remind me that I'm making an impact." Since graduating from BYU, Lemon has spent the bulk of his career in the classroom at American Fork Junior High School, where he discovered the joy of helping students experience those aha moments.

"We have so much potential within us, far more than we realize," he said in his address at the college as part of BYU's 2025 Honored Alumni Lectures. "The pressing question has to do with how we will unlock this potential in ourselves and others."

Beyond the Classroom

Lemon's influence extends far beyond his own students. For ten years, he served on the board of the Utah Council of Teachers of Mathematics (UCTM), including a term as president where he helped shape statewide initiatives to improve math instruction. He has also contributed through the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) as an editorial panel member, program committee participant, and conference presenter. His work has appeared in NCTM's practitioner journal, sharing insights that help teachers everywhere improve their craft.

As a member of the Mathematics Vision Project, Lemon helped author the widely used Open Up High School Mathematics curriculum. "We authored the materials with the intent of supporting teachers and students in realizing an engaging and relevant mathematical learning experience," Lemon explains. Those materials now reach more than 650,000 students worldwide. "It is

humbling to think of the impact and opportunities provided because of our team's efforts," he says.

Lemon's dedication to bettering education has earned him some of the highest honors in his field. He achieved National Board Certification in Early Adolescence/Mathematics, a rigorous process that reflects mastery in teaching. He also received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (the nation's top honor for STEM educators) and the Huntsman Award for Excellence in Education, which celebrates outstanding contributions to Utah education.

Lemon's inspiration to go the extra mile? Advice he received as a missionary, before his career even got started. "My mission president told me that doing the little bit of extra to be in the top five percent of professionals is more important than the field you choose," he says.

Galvanized for Good

As it turns out, Lemon has his mission to thank for his choice of field as well. He explains, "I was inspired to pursue teaching when serving a full-time mission and seeing the impact of the gospel in the lives of the people I taught." After returning home, he found a way to continue teaching and influencing others for good by changing his major to mathematics education. He feels assured he made the right decision every time he sees a student's understanding deepen. "It's always rewarding to hear from former students who express appreciation and share how the time in my classroom was impactful and shaped their future," he says.

Lemon credits several BYU professors with shaping his future: Blake Peterson, Keith Leatham, Steve Williams,

Dan Siebert, and Doug Corey. "Whether in class or during office consultations, they were always respectful, helpful, and supportive," Lemon says. Peterson, his thesis advisor, provided "the highest levels of support and encouragement," making Lemon feel like a true colleague during his graduate research.

Lemon's approach to teaching and leadership is deeply influenced by these examples of scholarly greatness, as well as by many gospel principles. "The Lord loves effort," Lemon says, quoting President Russell M. Nelson. "This applies to all the work that we do—not just with living the commandments but also our efforts to learn, to research, and to apply our knowledge and understanding we have gained to the work we do."

Making Things Happen

At home in Lehi, Utah, Lemon and his wife, Marnée, whom he met at BYU, are raising five children and enjoying opportunities to serve in the Church and their community, including during times of challenge.

"It is during difficult times that we need to recommit, refresh, remember our purpose and the promise of

"The aha moments and light bulbs I see go on in my classroom every day are a great reward."

the vision that we seek," Lemon shared during his college lecture. For him, resilience is not just about enduring hardship. It is about using hardship as a springboard for growth. He says, "Having an understanding of the gospel, the love of God, and the promise of the Atonement provides hope and faith in ongoing renewal. That hope inspires me to keep trying and striving for something better each day."

After all, as he said in his college lecture, "You are never too experienced or too old to learn and to grow."

Looking ahead, Lemon hopes to continue refining his teaching practices and supporting others in the profession. His mother once told him there are three types of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder what happened. "We need to be part of the first group that makes things happen," Lemon says.

For him, teaching mathematics is about more than numbers. It's about inspiring curiosity and building confidence. Through his passion for education and his commitment to service, Lemon continues to make things happen, and the impact is felt far beyond his classroom. **■**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRAVIS LEMON





ANDREW STACEY



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF OCULAR ONCOLOGY THROUGH PRECISION MEDICINE

I have always been interested in helping patients with cancer,” says Andrew W. Stacey (BS '06, MS '07). And thanks in part to his early days at BYU, Stacey has been able to do just that through a career at the intersection of medicine and analytics.

Stacey earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in statistics at BYU, all while playing for the BYU Cougars football team. He considered a PhD in statistics but realized he wanted to solve problems that mattered most to people’s lives. That realization led Stacey to medicine. He completed his MD at The Ohio State University, followed by an ophthalmology residency at the University of Michigan and then a fellowship in ocular oncology at the world-renowned Moorfields Eye Hospital in London.

“I entered medical school thinking I would take care of children with cancer, but I knew very little about the various medical specialties,” Stacey explains. During medical school, he fell in love with the operating room. He wanted to find a way to combine his love of surgery with his desire to care for patients with cancer. Ophthalmology and ocular oncology allowed him to do that.

Today, Stacey is an associate professor of ophthalmology at the University of Washington (UW). At the Seattle Children’s Hospital he directs the region’s only comprehensive ocular oncology program. His clinical practice spans the Northwestern United States and Alaska, and he treats adults and children with rare and aggressive eye cancers such as retinoblastoma, uveal melanoma, and ocular lymphoma.

Becoming Part of Progress

In his specialty, Stacey has had the opportunity to engage with personalized medicine. “Cancer care is changing so quickly,” he says. “Personalized medicine is a phrase that refers to the ability to treat each individual personally and specifically with the treatments and medications that are tailored based on various biomarkers in each individual. We are already doing this, and with the advances in genetic and analytical tools at our disposal, it will soon become the hallmark of cancer care.”

His enthusiasm is obvious as he adds, “I am so excited to be part of the body of international researchers and surgeons who are finding new genetic biomarkers and new



personalized treatments for patients with ocular cancers.” Stacey says he has his analytical foundation to thank for enabling this work: “My statistics education at BYU is a major reason I am able to play a role in this exciting field.”

In fact, that education has opened numerous doors. “It has allowed me to jump on research projects, to work with exclusive laboratories and projects, and it has allowed me to develop trials and international collaborations,” he says. “As a faculty member at UW, I meet a lot of prospective medical students. I tell every one of them that statistics is the best undergraduate degree for any aspiring physician.”

Stacey’s training in statistics has also allowed him to make an incredible impact through mentorship. “I saw in the Statistics Department at BYU a group of faculty who were one hundred percent committed to students and to mentorship,” he says. This commitment stuck with him, and as a result, a major portion of his research practice is devoted to training medical students and residents to conduct research.

Molded by Mentors

Stacey’s years at Brigham Young University were transformative, shaping not only his academic foundation but also his vision for a career that blends faith, service, and science. “During my time at BYU, I came to believe strongly in the motto ‘Enter to learn; go forth to serve.’ I saw my professors who had made a decision to dedicate their careers to teaching and shaping the next generation, and I wanted to emulate them,” Stacey says. That desire to combine professional excellence with spiritual purpose ultimately led him toward academic medicine, a field where he could teach, research, and serve.

Among the professors who left a lasting mark, his graduate advisor, current BYU President C. Shane Reese, stands out. Stacey worked as his teaching assistant and credits Reese with shaping both his professional and personal outlook. “From a career standpoint, I see everything through a Bayesian lens, including the art of doctoring and diagnosing disease,” Stacey says. “From a faith standpoint, I often think about the ways Dr. Reese wove the gospel into his lectures and into the way he sees the world. I’ve always tried to emulate that as well as his general love of life.”

BYU also gave Stacey lessons outside academia. As a member of the football team under Coach Bronco Mendenhall, he learned resilience and leadership. Of Coach Mendenhall, Stacey says, “He believed in me and expected more out of me than I thought I could expect out of myself. He taught me how to help people see their potential.” That lesson continues to guide Stacey’s work with both patients and students.

Turning to the Source of All Light

For Stacey, practicing medicine isn’t so separate from practicing discipleship. “A scholar dedicates themselves to a discipline,” he says. “A disciple dedicates themselves to the discipline of Christ’s gospel. For me, science and faith are not just compatible; they are interdependent. God is the greatest scientist, and science is the way God created this earth.”

Stacey sees God’s hand not only in scientific principles but in all areas of his work. He says, “I see Him in parents who are willing to drop their whole life to care for a child with a new cancer diagnosis. I see His light when something clicks, and our trainees learn a new medical principle. I see His scientific brilliance when I discover a new biomarker for the first time.”

In his role as an ocular oncologist, Stacey often faces the difficult task of delivering life-altering news to patients and families. “Cancer is life changing, and its messenger requires a delicate touch. If I have been successful in helping patients through these tough situations, it is only because I have been able to share some of His light with them,” he says.

Reliance on Christ’s light and example influences how Stacey wakes up, what he listens to, how he approaches problems, and how he speaks to people. “I am certain that if I approach a situation the way Christ would approach the situation, I will be more successful,” he says. For Stacey, the ultimate handbook for life and career is found in scripture: the four Gospels and the words of Christ in the Book of Mormon. “If I can act the way He acted, then no problem is too large, and no situation is too complicated.” ■

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREW STACEY

ABOVE: COURTESY OF UW MEDICINE

“God is the greatest scientist, and science is the way God created this earth.”





BYU geology students, faculty, and alumni donors visited the "Mother of All Outcrops," as well as other geological sites, during a BYU Geology field trip to Oman in December 2025. Student participation was made possible through generous donor support, including from alumni who joined the trip.

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