Vita

I have had the good fortune to accomplish many of my dreams in this life. Obtaining a PhD is one of them. I was born January 4, 1957 into a family of six children; and spent my formative years in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania. Neither of my parents went to college. We grew up in the 60s and 70s with many of the values our parents learned in the 30s and 40s. After graduating from college in 1978, I moved to Texas, worked in a variety of jobs, and settled into the vocation of auto mechanic. I returned to college in 1986 with the idea of studying agriculture. In 1990, I obtained an Agricultural Engineering degree from Texas Tech University and ended up taking a job as an assistant design engineer in a civil engineering consulting firm in Paris, Texas, the second largest Paris in the world. In 1993, I enrolled in graduate school at VPI in Blacksburg, Virginia to further my studies in agriculture, obtaining an M.S. in Biological Systems Engineering in 1995. After working four years for Cornell Cooperative Extension in Ithaca, NY, I returned to Blacksburg as a newly married man, entering an interdisciplinary doctoral program in Forestry. With the birth of our first son, Yusuf, I left school to work, and applied to Virginia Tech’s Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering for doctoral study.

Now it is almost four years later and I can look back at the big blessing I have been given over these past four years. We have been granted another son, Ahmad, and have made many wonderful acquaintances in Civil & Environmental Engineering and Virginia Tech. With the time left to me in this life, I hope I can repay some of what has been given to me, for the next generation. May Allah make them better than us. Ameen.

Mark Dougherty
Blacksburg, Virginia
1 May, 2004