

John Lavrakas

After graduating June 1975 as HMC/CGS's first five-year mathematics graduate in Masters program, I moved to South Bend to teach at Indiana Vocational Technical College (3 years), then returned to So Cal to work in aerospace. Within two years, I started working on GPS and stayed with it for 40 years. It was a fully gratifying career, with lots of math and systems engineering.

In 1978, I married Melody Shipherd, a good friend I had met when roommate Doug Burum set me up on a blind date in 1971. We're celebrating our 45th anniversary next month. We have three kids, Miranda (GIS analyst in Portland OR), James (life coach and former graphic artist at Disney Animation), and Robert (sales rep, first for bicycles, now for titanium fasteners). All three are married, and we have one (count them, one) grandchild - Nora.

My career trajectory followed GPS, first helping to build the ground control network, then moving to Colorado Springs working alongside the Air Force to maintain the network, and operate it. I also worked with the FAA to analyze GPS performance data. I broke off from other companies to be an entrepreneur in GPS tracking technology, returned after failure to launch. It was too early for GPS tracking in 1997. Eventually I got to work in GPS policy, supporting the DoD and eventually the Dept of Transportation. My last stint was five years supporting the United Nations International Committee on GNSS, working alongside GNSS engineers from Russia, China, Europe, Japan, and India. I was active in the Institute of Navigation, eventually serving as its president, and being given the ION Fellow award.

Melody and I live now in Newport Oregon (since 2007), where I volunteer as the Executive Director of the Newport Symphony Orchestra, and enjoy photography and being a grandparent.

