

Brian Morris – Testimony

I've been a veteran *FIRST*[®] member, with my involvement spanning seven years and several programs offered by the organization. *FIRST* has been an integral part of my development as a person, as a student, and as an aspiring engineer. It has challenged and trained me in ways normal classroom schooling never has, and because of *FIRST*, I feel more prepared to face the challenges and obstacles of the "real world" than I ever imagined I would.

My involvement with *FIRST* dates back to the seventh grade, when five of my friends and I decided to give robotics a try through *FIRST*[®] LEGO[®] League. While I originally thought of *FIRST* programs only as games to play for entertainment, I soon realized it was so much more. *FIRST* isn't just about the competition, it's also about the learning and life experiences of being on a team, working with technology, solving problems, and inspiring others to do the same. This is what really got me hooked on *FIRST*: competing, learning, and having fun all at the same time.

I couldn't say what my favorite part of *FIRST* is; there's really just too much I've enjoyed. I've had the chance to work on long-term projects, seeing them go from the drawing board to physical finished products, my favorite aspect of engineering. I've learned invaluable technical skills, as well as how to manage and lead large groups. The *FIRST* community puts the program first, above any individual goals or interests, and it is overwhelmingly helpful and supportive thanks to the *FIRST* principles of Gracious Professionalism. The outpouring of passion and energy at *FIRST* events is truly refreshing, and watching the enthusiasm of so many young people for science and engineering gives me hope for the future.

FIRST has helped me discover my passion for engineering, and because of *FIRST*, I can definitively say that I want to pursue Electrical Engineering and Computer Science as a career. I've applied to several top engineering schools in Virginia and the nation, and I hope my experience with *FIRST* will give me an edge in admissions. And no matter what university I end up at, I'm sure the skills I learned with *FIRST* will serve me in my studies and beyond.