

**Mike Brennan**

**Director, Product Development Engineer**

*"I overcome hurdles through preparation, persistence and collaboration. At a company like AMD, you are not alone, and you need to rely on teamwork to tackle many of the difficult, complex problems."*



**1. Tell us about yourself and your role at AMD.**

I began my career with AMD in California where I worked on technology development for flash memory. I currently work out of the Canadian office in Markham, ON, where I lead a team of engineers responsible for high volume manufacturing and silicon failure analysis.

**2. What hobbies did you have growing up?**

My parents bought me a Commodore64 when I was in elementary school and I spent a lot of time writing programs in BASIC. I also spent some time playing video games on some of the early game consoles like Coleco Vision and Atari 2600. As for hobbies requiring physical activity, I was an avid swimmer and spent my late teenage years as a lifeguard and swim instructor.

**3. When did you know you wanted to go into STEM and what inspired you?**

I always knew I wanted to do something related to mathematics or science from a very early age. Reading science fiction novels and watching science fiction (Star Trek, Star Wars etc.) generated an interest in astronomy, which eventually led to my interest in physics.

**4. What are your hobbies now?**

I really enjoy spending time with my family – traveling to just staying home playing board games or watching a movie together. As for individual hobbies, I still do computer programming on the side, but I don't spend nearly as much time at it as compared to when I was younger. I also decided to try my hand at Martial Arts, Karate to be specific, when I enrolled my oldest son in a Karate program when he was 7

years old. I ended up really enjoying it and continue this activity to the present (though the current pandemic has temporarily put things on hold), having earned a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt a few years ago.

**5. What do you like about working in semiconductors?**

What I like most about working with semiconductors is the fact that we build these extremely tiny devices that can have a tremendous impact on the world around us. It always amazes me to look at electron imaging of the semiconductor devices we make and to see the level of complexity required to pack billions of transistors into such a small area.



**6. What do you like about being an engineer at AMD?**

Being an engineer at AMD allows you to be creative, engage in difficult and complex problems and explore new and innovative ways to solve them. I have always had a lot of freedom to pursue new ideas and try out new things, even when I was a young engineer fresh out of university. It is a very collaborative atmosphere, and everyone tends to be very helpful and open-minded.

**7. What has been your biggest challenge and how do you overcome hurdles?**

My biggest academic challenge in STEM was pursuing my PhD, more specifically the comprehensive examinations and thesis defense.

I overcome hurdles through preparation, persistence, and collaboration. At a company like AMD, you are not alone, and you need to rely on teamwork to tackle many of the difficult, complex problems.

**8. What advice would you like to give students who want to pursue a career in STEM?**

Choose something that you enjoy doing. You will be much happier in your career and more likely to excel in your chosen field.