


Whatever Happened to Moira Gunn

Then	Capsule Summary	Now
 <p>How about those go-go boots???</p>	<p>Born in: Staten Island, New York Grew Up in: Menlo Park, California High School: Holy Cross High School Undergraduate Degree: BS Computer Science, University of San Francisco, 1970 Entered Purdue: Fall, 1970 Purdue Degrees: - MS CS, December 1971 - PhD Mechanical Engineering, June 1974 Lived/Worked in: San Francisco, CA (current residence)</p>	<p>Wish I still had those go-go boots ...</p> 
<p>Purdue Highlights</p>	<p>Career Highlights</p>	
<p>Moira came to Purdue to start a Master's in Computer Science in Fall of 1970 along with 2 other USF students, Dennis Kafura and Bernie McGinnis. After cramming her MS-CS into three semesters, she jumped over to Mechanical Engineering, where she got her PhD in 1974. She was the first female to do so at Purdue, and announced "The floodgates have opened", predicting that women would be charging through the front door. The next woman to earn a PhD in ME at Purdue did so in 1991. After that 1994. This was not the last prediction Moira got wrong, but the first one she distinctly remembers.</p> <p>One great thing that happened to Moira was that at Purdue she met her good friend Bev Ziegler, who worked in the computer center. They're still great friends today. Oh, yeah. And on her way out of town, she taped her Burt Reynolds Playgirl poster to John Steele's door. True Story.</p>	<p>Moira left Purdue and headed for NASA where she led the Applications Development Group at the Institute for Advanced Computation at NASA/Ames. She married and had two boys, and became a consultant – to everyone from the Navy, to Lockheed, IBM, Pratt-Whitney, and Morton-Thiokol, and about everything from robotics to non-destructive testing systems to earning a patent in a human nutrition measurement system to ... too many to mention, but this interest in everything under the sun led her 20 years ago to found Tech Nation, the weekly public radio show which is most easily heard by everyone at NPR.org – go to "listen" and click on "24-hour Program Stream" – and hit "schedule". It's on 4 times each weekend.</p> <p>Between this and its regular segment BioTech Nation, she gets to meet and talk to just about everybody – now that's fun!</p> <p>To pay the bills on a regular basis, Moira is the oldest and blondest tenure track assistant professor in the School of Management at the University of San Francisco, where she heads the Business of Biotech program, after being the Program Director for Information Systems. Her book, "Welcome to BioTech Nation" was cited to the Best Science Books list of 2007 by the American Library Association. In 2011, the National Science Board awarded her the National Public Service Medal to the Individual for her contributions to the public understanding of science and engineering, and gave it to her at a Black Tie dinner at the State Department. (It's a really great party when a guard comes up to you, and says, "Ma'am, please stop touching the Declaration of Independence.") Purdue has been good to Gunn – besides naming her a distinguished alumna in both Science and Engineering, and making her a "Distinguished Engineer" and an "Old Master" of the university, they also gave her an honorary doctorate in science. Can't have too many doctorates. She also founded their Science Journalism Laureates program. At the same</p>	

	<p>time, if you ask her, she loves being a grandmother and dating a guy she went to the first grade with. (Do you know how hard it is to lie about your age to someone you went to the first grade with?) Yet, she still loves her work, as it brings experiences that she could never have imagined. Prepping for an interview with Gordon Moore, she was on the telephone with him, explaining that she was a technical person, when he interrupted her to say: "I know. I googled you."</p> <p>Gunn was stunned, as any Computer Scientist can appreciate: "O...M...G... Gordon Moore googled me ..."</p>
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