Teacher Spotlight: Dr. Bonham
By Tim Morgan

Most people remember their “firsts” (first car, first kiss, etc.) and I not being any different, remember Dr. Bonham as my first physics research mentor.

He had the courage to take on such a novice to assist him in his physics education research (PER), examining the difference between homework essay responses submitted online verses paper. Much patience was shown on his part coaching me through the research process and developing the mentality to handle it all. With his methodical thought, we were successful in executing our experiment, analyzing the results and presenting our research at the summer 2003 American Association of Physics Teachers (AAPT) meeting. His constant encouragement as a mentor helped increase my interest in physics to continue my journey investigating it.

Though I changed research mentors, Dr. Bonham and I continued to help one another out. He encouraged me to explore my new avenue of research, which has brought me to my current interest, condensed matter physics. This happens to be the field in which Dr. Bonham received his doctorate. He later called on me to be a Physics Applets for Drawling (PAD) debugger and teaching assistant for College Physics I, while I asked for letters of recommendations for Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU). He was always there to help me in my pursuit to become a physicist. He later became my Modern Physics II instructor, where he showed his ability to instruct higher level physics. He put forth great effort in developing a class that would ensure the students would have an opportunity to gain a thorough understanding of the topic.

Dr. Bonham continues his PER, but his skill is not solely in improving physics education. He has displayed his prowess in developing students to become motivated, skilled pupils of physics.