

Duane Pontius — 80's

Somehow, Duane Pontius managed to do interesting research on the magnetospheres of Earth, Jupiter, and Saturn as well as some not-so-interesting research on turbulence in the interplanetary medium. These efforts include the prediction of bubbles in the Earth's magnetotail and blobs in Saturn's plasma sheet, both grudgingly verified by experimentalists. He is now involved in neuroscience research using graph theory and network analysis of functional MRI data of human brain activity. Since 1999, he has concentrated his professional efforts on implementing effective methods in undergraduate education at Birmingham-Southern College. At the risk of citing one award to bolster the case for another, he has been recognized for his teaching by a variety of honors including the 2009 Alabama Teacher of the Year given by the CASE/Carnegie foundation. He was also twice awarded BSC's Presidential Service award and was twice named as an "Alert Reader" by columnist Dave Barry. He annually leads twenty college students on a three-week adventure in sail training aboard classic tall ships. Having accumulated over ten thousand nautical miles at sea, he is entitled to a pair of swallow tattoos, but he is uncertain whether they are optional or mandatory. On Wednesdays he works as a prep chef in the kitchen of an upscale restaurant in Birmingham learning the subtleties of southern bistro cuisine.