

## A. Nico Habermann Educational Service Award

Ian Voysey

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Thank you, Dean Bryant, for this award. I am humbled and grateful.

While I'm trotting out my Meryl Streep impression, this seems like the moment to single out Mark Stehlik and thank him for everything he's done for me. The list is too long and too personal to be enumerated, but it does include choosing to inaugurate this award this year—and probably excludes saying whatever he's about to say about me. So, Mark: thank you.

I'd also like to thank Dan Licata, Bob Harper, and Guy Belloch for trying to teach me what of teaching can be taught and, more importantly, for leaving me alone to figure out the rest. Finally, I'd like to thank Bob Harper again for showing me what programming languages are so I could fall in love with them.

Usually the people making remarks after getting an award like this are graduating students themselves, and therefore entitled to speak as equally excited and confused peers. I have already graduated, so that is not a luxury I have. Luckily for you, though, I graduated quite recently, so I'm also not qualified to make the sort of genuinely helpful—if somewhat lengthy—remarks you'll be hearing for the rest of the weekend.

Instead, I have one small piece of pretty unhelpful advice to offer: only do things you love.

It's easy to do things you like, work for the weekend, and not worry about it much; I'd like to make a case for only doing things that you're insanely passionate about. If you aren't regularly waking up at two o'clock in the morning, full of ideas and squinting around for your pen, or if you aren't known for being a total bore at parties because you alternate between staring at your feet and talking excitedly about constructive logic (or whatever), then I say something is wrong.

Taking my advice may mean that, to your parent's and loan-holder's collective horror, you become a baker for 18 months or move to a yurt in Montana to do mathematics and raise cattle in peace. It certainly will mean that paying your rent will be a bit of a scrape a few times. The reward, though, is that when you're confused you get to rejoice in your confusion and enjoy it. What more could you want than a life where everything's a puzzle and you always care about the answer?

I happen to love thinking about programming languages and trying to help other people to think about them. That's the only reason that I feel remotely qualified to accept this award. I have no idea what you love, and even if I thought I did, I wouldn't presume to tell you. But, please, don't settle for anything less than insane passion. You're too smart, too good, and—as of about five o'clock tomorrow evening—officially too well-educated to be bored.