

# I am The **ROCK**

## Robert Vallin

**Job:** Professor of mathematics.

**Joined SRU:** 1992.

**Background:** Born and reared outside of Washington, D.C. I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and a masters and doctorate from North Carolina State University. I was first attracted to mathematics because I could get the right answer, but then I grew to appreciate it as an ever-evolving intellectual and creative endeavor.

**Interests:** Outside of mathematics, I have my five children and my wife Jackie Jensen, an SRU mathematics faculty member, to keep me busy. I spend free time reading, doing crossword, Sudoku and KenKen puzzles and nurturing my fan boy love of comic books. I am also learning about card tricks that are based on mathematical ideas.

**Person(s) I would like to have dinner with:** Thomas Jefferson.

**Why I work at The Rock:** Opening students' eyes to things beyond arithmetic and basic algebra is wonderful work to do. I especially enjoy this with our majors as they transform from people who were adept at symbolic manipulation into mathematicians with a deep understanding of some very complex ideas. SRU is supportive of this, helping us send students to the Joint Mathematics Meetings and start up our 'Dead Poets Society,' along with backing our student teams in the international Mathematical Contest in Modeling.

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