In the 1960s, Joyce Statz ’69 was given clear direction on her future: the only thing girls can do with a math degree is teach. “I won’t,” Joyce thought. “I’ll do something different.”

She went on to earn a master’s and PhD in computer science. Along the way, Joyce discovered her passion for using technology to help people solve problems. Some of these people were young children, struggling to do anything people would respect as art. Helping them to program a turtle robot to draw their creations got them the envy of their peers. Some of these people were company executives trying to understand how to minimize the expense of their software systems.

This is the point in the story where Joyce admits that she did teach for a while at Bowling Green University, but then a friend said, “Industry is fun. You should try that.” So, Joyce did. She took a sabbatical for an entry-level programming job at Texas Instruments. Within two weeks she was a project manager, and she was eventually working with specialized artificial intelligence machines that made the theory of graduate school a reality for business. (Today, that same artificial intelligence is what makes a google search possible. “Google is the coolest thing,” Joyce said.)

More than 15 years later, a friend proposed a different idea: “Let’s build something ourselves.” And, they did. Joyce and her colleagues created TeraQuest, a well-regarded industry leader that provided guidance on how to optimize processes to help software organizations work smarter, faster, and better. After a while, the partners sold to Borland Software Corporation, and Joyce gave overseas operations a try as a vice president with Borland. At the moment, she’s an independent consultant providing guidance in project management (and teaching in the evenings), but also dabbling more in volunteer work, to find the area of passion for those retirement years ahead. After years of 80-hour weeks, it’s a different pace for her.

“Maybe I just don’t like being told what to do. Maybe I just enjoy the process of discovery. Maybe I just always think there’s got to be a better way,” Joyce said, in regard to her career journey. “You’ve got to know the discipline first; then break the rules.”