Important work skills: Loyalty, curiosity, observation — and accumulating knowledge and understanding of island agroforestry systems. Humility, service, writing, record-keeping, and logic are also important.

Example of a simple question, problem, or challenge encountered in my work: I most often work with people for whom English is a second language. I cannot learn all of their languages, but I try to learn some phrases and vocabulary, both to show respect and to get a better understanding of key concepts. I try to speak English clearly and carefully.

What classes or course work have been most helpful in your career? Silviculture, soil science, horticulture, natural resource economics, extension and communications, participatory rural appraisal and planning.

Technology or equipment used in my work: A camera. A picture is worth a thousand words.

Most Exciting Project I worked on a team including meteorologists, climatologists, website designers, a graphic artist, a translator, a geographer and Marshallese agroforestry practitioners, to create a website that provides up-to-date information about weather and climate in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, agroforestry advice, and El Niño conditions.

When did you know that this career would be a good fit for you? When I was young, I learned about the “Renaissance Man” ideal — a scholar in 1400-1600 A.D. who was proficient in multiple fields. I thought, “Oh, it’s 1973, I’m too late.” But agroforestry is very multidisciplinary — I use not only biological science but also economics, foreign languages, and art.