Dr. David C. Munson, Jr.: Hello RIT alumni and friends. President Dave Munson here. I'm continuing my Alumni Tiger Tour, spending time in cities near and far, getting to know a number of our alumni. I'm here in San Jose, California, with 2004 alumna, Anna Sweet, an entrepreneur and innovator. Anna is currently a business content and strategy executive for Caffeine, which is a new live streaming platform for the gaming industry. Earlier this year, Anna founded Octave Nine, a tech consulting firm focused on augmented reality, virtual reality, and mixed reality. She began her career at Microsoft as a program manager, and software development engineer, an opportunity she credits to a co-op she held while attending RIT. She's held positions at MySpace, Valve Corporation, Facebook, and Oculus VR. In addition to her career in the gaming industry, Anna is co-founder of Sweet Farm Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the humane treatment of animals in the food system. It's great to meet you Anna, and let me congratulate you on an amazing career. I can only imagine what lies ahead for you.

Anna Sweet: Hello. It's really nice to meet you, and I'm glad to be here today.

Munson: That's great Anna, and so ... I have a few questions that I'd like to ask, and kind of poke your brain just a bit here. The first is professionally speaking, what do you consider to be your biggest success? You've done a lot of things. I just ran through some of you background, but what's your biggest success to date?

Sweet: As of the last four years, I have been working on the emergence of virtual reality. It started at Valve, where I worked on the roll out of the HTC Vibe. And then, was recruited by Facebook to come down and work on Oculus VR. It's really exciting to work on emerging technology. Part of my job was getting to work with all of the amazing game designers, and developers, who are embracing this tech. I've had a really fun four years, where I've gotten to show them VR the first time, get them engaged, in building in the space, and then help them actually build that into a business, so ...

Munson: Wow. Sounds like you're very much in demand. What has been the biggest challenge, would you say, in either your career, or maybe even in your current position?
**Sweet:** I was a computer science major at RIT. When I got, actually to my first full-time job at Microsoft, I realized that I didn't actually like coding full-time.

**Munson:** Oh boy.

**Sweet:** And so, I think for me, it was really finding what I was good at, and what my path, in the games industry would be. And for me, that was taking what I had learned at RIT, and all of the computer science skills, and using that to work with engineers, and help build a business. So, now I work on the business side, but I still have a focus on the tech, and how it all works.

**Munson:** So, did you find, maybe you were, maybe more of a people person, and wanted to work with groups, rather than be more alone and doing your own coding? How would you describe that?

**Sweet:** Yeah. I was more of a people person, but I was also much more interested in the business and the product strategy.

**Munson:** Oh. Okay.

**Sweet:** And so, for me it was wanting to work at a higher level, and really understanding why we were building what we were building, and how we made strategic decisions around it.

**Munson:** You referred to your computer science background, from RIT. Is there anything specific about your time at RIT that you think helped prepare you for your career?

**Sweet:** Yeah, so I was fortunate enough to be at RIT the first year that it was putting together what's now its game design and development program. At the time, that was very, very forward thinking. It was one of the only schools that had it. And so, when I went to apply to Microsoft, they were surprised to see that I had game development experience on my resume. I think that set me up to get into video games, which is the industry I had always wanted to work in.

**Munson:** Wow. That's great to hear. What advice would you have for our students at RIT?
Sweet: I think, whether you are an engineer, or a business person, I think it's always helpful to learn the other side. Certainly, for me that was helpful, and making sure I had a balanced set of skills.

Munson: That sounds like great advice. Is there any advice you would have for our fellow alumni and maybe how they connect back to the campus? I don't know if you visited recently, or not.

Sweet: It's been a little while, since I've been back. I think it's been two, or three years. It's amazing how much it had grown then, so I'm sure it's even more awesome now. I think for me though, I find myself running into RIT alums all over the place. Every time I do, I'm super impressed with who they are, and the careers they've built, so ... I think my advice would be, to reach out, and find the network, whether it's local to you, or back at the school, because I've been fortunate that they've all been pretty awesome.

Munson: Well, that's good to hear. We certainly welcome all of our alums back on campus. It is changing, literally, every year. Well, thank you Anna, for your time today. It's been great chatting with you. I'm looking forward to seeing you on campus in the future. Thanks to our listeners for tuning in. Go Tigers.