

Mitch Onizuka

Has had an exciting month; just a few weeks ago Mitch, his wife Karen, and their 20-month-old daughter Akari welcomed into the family another little girl named Sora, which means "sky" in Japanese.

Mitch grew up in Japan; he lived in Miyazaki, Tokyo, Sapporo, and Kuwana. In 1991, ventured to Colorado to further his education. Along with taking classes at a local college, Mitch had various occupations. One of Mitch's particularly interesting jobs was interpreting at the 1997 G8 leaders summit, which was attended by eight of the world's most powerful heads of government.

Mitch studied Aerospace Engineering at the University of Colorado/Boulder, where he gained valuable experience working on the Citizen Explorer-1 (CX-1).

After graduation, he returned to Japan, where he began working for Mitsubishi. Then he joined the National Space Development Agency, which is now known as JAXA.

In 2005, Mitch came back to the U.S. to attend graduate school at CU-Boulder, where he continued working on CX-1 and also worked MicroSat Systems, Inc. (MSI) as an intern and then became an employee. Mitch is a critical member of MSI's Systems Engineering Department, as he performs various job functions as an Integration & Test Engineer. He has worked on two of MSI's major programs, COOP and DSX, and will also support the ORBCOMM program.

In his spare time, Mitch enjoys rebuilding motorcycles. He has an unlimited class motorcycle license in Japan, which is a pretty big feat because only 7% of those that apply for it actually pass the test. Mitch enjoys camping, hiking, theatre, music, and recently he has taken up fire breathing. During his youth, he received a 2nd-degree black belt in Shotokan Karate and a 2nd-degree Dan in Kendo, and says both have attributed to who he is today.





Mitch practicing his new hobby fire breathing

Mitch has also made multiple television appearances. After entering a filmmaking contest, he became a finalist on a Japanese TV show and was also featured with his wife on a reality series on couples.

Mitch and Karen spend most of their time outside of work playing with their children. Mitch says that Akari (his oldest daughter) has a strong-willed personality. Like her father, she likes taking apart and putting things together, as well as climbing, and acting like a parent to her new sister. When asked about his hopes for his children, Mitch replied, "I don't have any idea about their future. I just hope to succeed in raising them to be proper girls who can chase away the boys with sticks.