When I was down in Florida as an astronaut candidate, our class actually had the chance to see Discovery up close. That was the first vehicle I saw up close and it was being stacked and readied to roll out to the pad and so a couple of us even stayed longer and we got to see Discovery head out of the VAB and start rolling towards, to the pad and this was a really big deal because it was Return to Flight.

Everything was really exciting because it's, I mean, you've imagined this vehicle, all the vehicles for a long time and when you see something up close you realize, what's tile, what's not tile, what's a blanket. It's just a really beautiful vehicle.

It's a really clean vehicle and people always ask, you know, after the use of these vehicles, do they start to show their wear and tear? Yeah, on the outside they do because we don't replace everything because we don't have to. Some things can remain on, so the blankets and stuff aren't pristine white because they can be reused. That's the whole point of having a reusable vehicle. But inside, she is really clean and you can tell that crews have a lot of pride in her and that of course the folks that fix
her up when she's down at the OPF, they also have a lot of pride in her. But it's a great vehicle.

Later when I went back, well, actually I found out just a few months before I flew, my mom was cleaning my old bedroom back at home in Colorado and she said, "Hey, you know that shuttle model that you made when you went to Space Camp?" I was like, yeah, it's hanging in my room.

It's kind of funny mom, you probably need to take down the shrine or something, and she said, "Well, I looked and it's Discovery." And I was just like, that's really cool that I made this model and it ends up, because of delays that we had due to cold weather we had in Florida, we end up flying 20 years after I went to Space Camp in Huntsville and it was on the vehicle I made the model of. So that's just kind of a neat connection. It just happened by chance but it was really cool chance that it happened.