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I am a physical oceanographer living and working in my hometown in South Florida. While I didn't always know I would be an oceanographer, the love of water was instilled in me at an early age growing up surrounded by swimming pools, the Florida Straits, and the Gulf of Mexico. My family moved from Cuba almost a decade before I was born, and the romanticized notion of my parents' homeland separated from the United States by just 90 miles of seawater may have also been a contributing factor.

I began to consider becoming an oceanographer near the end of high school—I really enjoyed math and physics, and oceanography seemed to be a perfect field to apply those skills. I studied applied marine physics at the University of Miami for my master's degree and then physical oceanography at Oregon State University for my doctorate. My path to getting my PhD was fairly linear in that I had a clear goal in mind from early on. But, I definitely took the scenic route and considered alternate paths. After finishing a postdoc in Seattle, I moved back to South Florida to take my current job. It is quite rare in our field to return to your hometown, and I am very grateful that my life and career worked out that way.

My current research is focused on developing a better understanding of the processes that influence ocean currents and their roles in ocean-atmosphere heat exchange on seasonal to decadal time scales. Recently, I have been working to understand the role of the South Atlantic Ocean in the global meridional overturning circulation, to characterize how upper ocean currents in the tropical Atlantic and Pacific vary, and to build a high resolution velocity data set from a network of global drifting buoys. This work is very broad in scope and requires strong collaboration with researchers from many national and international institutions. Going to science meetings and to sea in support of these projects is becoming a very important part of my job.

While work-related travel can be incredibly rewarding, it can also be personally challenging because it requires that I spend time away from my husband and our daughter. Those



Renellys with her husband, Bertrand, and their daughter, Viviane, on Miami's South Beach.

times away are far less difficult than they could be because of my superhero of a husband and our extensive network of family and friends. Technological advances, such as increased Internet access at sea, make it possible to stay in touch from very remote locations in the Atlantic Ocean.

Until recently, my greatest career challenge was learning how to navigate the US science funding system. I have become more successful at getting research grants funded in the past few years, and now the new challenge will be learning how to make progress on multiple projects simultaneously. Basically, I will need to use the multitasking skills that I have honed being a woman in science and trying to balance family and a career.