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Passenger: Edward Porter Felt

Sunday, October 28, 2001

As an undergraduate at Colgate University, Edward Felt had to deal with ribbing from pre-med students for acing biology and chemistry courses and destroying the grading curve.

Felt, a computer science major, wasn't interested in medicine. He was interested in learning.

Like many kids growing up, Felt liked to take household items apart to see how they worked. The difference was, he put them back together without any leftover pieces. At 6, he tried to rewire the basement of the family home in Clinton, N.Y.

The oldest of three boys, he set the pace for academic achievement in school.

"We were always being compared to him," said his youngest brother, Gordon, of Remsen, N.Y.

On the third day of freshman orientation at Colgate in 1977, he met another freshman, Sandy Valdez. The two became friends and married in 1982. Sandy Felt remembered how even as a college freshman, her

husband would become animated talking about computers, encryption techniques or chaos theory, all the while drawing diagrams and graphs on napkins.



Edward Porter Felt

■ **Computer engineer, BEA Systems, 41, Matawan, N.J.**

Wife, Sandy; daughters, Adrienne, 14, Kathryn, 11

He was on his way to a business meeting in San Francisco



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Felt was not jump-off-the-chair animated. Instead, his eyes brightened and his focus became more intense, but he always remained calmly confident of his ability to solve problems and explain.

After earning a master's degree from Cornell University, Felt was hired as a programmer by AT&T. A later stint with Novell morphed into a job in 1996 with BEA Systems, an e-business infrastructure software company in Liberty Corner, N.J.

Felt was one of the top five engineers at the billion-dollar company, and received a U.S. patent in August for a software application he designed for BEA.

He loved gadgetry. His home computer was equipped with everything, and so was the TV. He often ordered items from Scientific American magazine to use while teaching his two daughters about science.

But he also loved being outside. During summers, he often swam 40 laps nightly and ran four miles. He would do his running late at night, after having had dinner with his family and spending time with his daughters.

Felt's wife said his ability to focus provided a sense of security to his family, co-workers and friends.

"He just had an amazing ability to calm himself and to calm others," she said.

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