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Ellingboe attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he earned a Bachelors in Applied Maths, Engineering and Physics, also working in the research Labs of Noah Hershkowitz (Fusion) and John Conrad (Plasma Source Ion Implantation). Working at IBM T.J. Watson and Varian Central Research labs he did research on plasma source technology and technology transfer to manufacturing. From 1991-1995 he did his Doctoral work at The Australian National University on Helicon-Plasma-Sources, elucidating the E-H-and-Wave power coupling modes. Returning to the USA he continued researching Helicon Plasmas and novel plasma technology for applicatio to Silicon-on-Plastic at Lawrence Livermore National Lab, then large-area plasma sources at Applied Materials Flat Panel, then Lam Research where he was the technical lead on the 300mm Exelan dielectric etcher. He then moved to Ireland to become the Research Director of the Plasma Research Lab at Dublin City University where he continues to develop plasma sources and the associated rf-power systems, plasma diagnostics, and plasma modelling for advanced plasma applications.