I found myself reading the Quality Time article by Forrest Shull, Carolyn Seaman, and Marvin Zelkowitz (“Victor R. Basili’s Contributions to Software Quality,” Jan./Feb. 2006) while seated in a doctor’s waiting room. I had to stop every few moments to suppress the goofy grin that kept taking over my face. People were looking at me. I must have seemed the über-geek to appear so enchanted by the pages of a software journal. I was enchanted. What a pleasure to see one of our industry’s true lions so beautifully lionized!

In nearly 40 years of patient, industrious work, Vic has shaped our industry and virtually all who practice in it. Not just researchers and process folk, but also developers who wouldn’t know Vic’s name go about their craft in ways that bear his mark. It is a monumental achievement by a gifted, industrious, and always generous contributor.

I do have a quibble about the article. It presents itself as a celebration of one man’s life’s work. In this case, the life’s work is considerably larger than the authors mentioned. The article was written as though Vic had never taught a class or workshop, never nurtured a single young Dieter Rombach or Ross Jeffery. I suspect Victor Basili’s major impact on our field will be the many new researchers, teachers, and practitioners that he has formed so impeccably in his University of Maryland program.

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The business end of the deal

Warren Harrison’s column “What Do Software Developers Need to Know about Business” (Sept./Oct. 2005) was excellent. I’ve been a huge proponent of developers knowing about business for a while now, and I’ve been shouted down more often than not. I think of software not as a service, but as an essential part of a business, especially when it comes to things like competitive edge. My mantra is, “Unless you know the intricacies of business in general and your enterprise’s specialty in particular, you’re not going to be effective.” I was encouraged to read that things have taken a turn for the better and that more and more software engineers are focusing on the business end of the deal.

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