



## MEMORIALS

### DOMINICK J. DEMICHELE (1934-2000)

#### IMAC FOUNDER

Dominick DeMichele, founder and Technical Director of the International Modal Analysis Conference (IMAC) passed away October 6, 2000 after a short illness. Dick will be remembered for his tireless efforts in promoting SEM and IMAC, serving on the executive boards of both and numerous other committees. He was a special person, giving freely of his time and energy. A special tribute is being planned at IMAC-XIX. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Dominick DeMichele Award Fund at SEM.

#### EULOGY BY PROFESSOR A.L. WICKS

##### DOMINICK DEMICHELE, ENGINEER AT GE, UNION COLLEGE DIRECTOR

This is the best of times the worst of times. It's not the Tale of Two Cities but the contrast of two emotions. We feel the sadness and grief of our loss of a husband, father or friend. But, in contrast we should celebrate a life well lived and rejoice in the privilege of having shared in that life.

If you read the biography of Dick DeMichele you'll find that he graduated from RPI in 1940 and promptly started his engineering career with General Electric the same year. He married his wonderful wife Josephine the following year. His career at GE spanned nearly 40 years during which time he and Jo raised a family of 3 sons and a daughter. He published numerous technical papers. He received four patents on various innovative engineering techniques and also won the coveted Coffin award. He retired in 1979, a full life by most any standard.

I had met Dick when he still worked a GE but I didn't get to know him until after he 'retired'. Actually, he didn't retire because he moved on to his second career.

Dick developed a series of continuing educational courses for Union College. They quickly gained national attention drawing students not only from the US but from overseas as well. He recruited talented speakers to teach these courses, many with international reputations for excellence. The real love of his second career was the International Modal Analysis Conference, quickly to become known as IMAC. We will hold the 19th IMAC in Feb of 2001, drawing over 700 participants from all over the world. This is Dick's conference. Its success is due solely to his hard work, foresight and dedication.

This man has had two noteworthy careers in one life, but is

this a true measure of a person? Not Hardly!! Beyond the engineer, the creative organized professional, was a special person. Dick was a gentle man. Dick was a kind man. Dick was a giving man.

He went out of his way to assist our foreign participants at the IMAC meetings. I have seen him help with their expenses out of his own pocket when they were short of funds. Dick would never mention that to anyone and he would probably be embarrassed that I am mentioning it now.

Dick was proud of his family. He would talk of Bill's efforts to publish his photography with beaming pride. Or, he would tell me about the latest presentation that Beth had made. I hadn't met Beth until Saturday but I knew her through her Dad. After Dickie's stroke, his father would keep me posted on his progress. Always optimistic, always supportive. He was so very proud of the effort the Dick was making to overcome the damage caused by the stroke. Bob was the Orlando connection. IMAC's home is Orlando and Bob has become a participant. I think Dick was easing him into becoming an engineer. Dick also took pride in his bride of 59 years. He was a true partner, sharing life's experiences.

Earlier in the summer I returned to my office after having played a round of golf. A friend in an adjacent office inquired to the quality of the round. I launched into a variety of complaints regarding the slowness of play. He reminded me that it was a beautiful day and that I was able to go out and play a round of golf. This same positive attitude exemplified Dick's approach to life. He focused on the positive. I have never heard him say a negative thing about another person. He appreciated the day, the sunshine and the ability to participate. Dick took the time to make a difference in people's lives. In an era when superstars are defined by the distance that they drive a golf ball or the number of passes they complete, maybe we should re-evaluate what it means to be a superstar. The true superstars are the people like Dick who give so much and ask for so little in return.

I once saw a sign at the entrance to a state park. It read, "Leave it better than you found it." Dick left this world a much better place than he found it. I'll miss him. Thank you.

Professor A.L. Wicks  
IMAC Conference Chair



Arun Shukla  
Vice President SEM

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO ARUN SHUKLA

Arun Shukla, Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics at the University of Rhode Island, has been recently appointed as the Simon Ostrach Professor and Chairman of Mechanical Engineering. This is the first endowed professorship in the Mechanical Engineering Department at URI. Arun Shukla is a long time member and Fellow of SEM and is currently serving as vice president of the society.

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## LETTER TO SEM

SEM Member, Steve Reynolds, commenting on Survey results in newsletter:

When I read the conclusion that experimental work was considered 'not very glamorous', I had to pull out my soapbox. This isn't a 'rant', but rather what seems true and maybe is a basis for a strategy to 'revitalize experimentation'

Basic Idea: If you want the best and most certain truth, you gotta experiment. A good experimental setup, when possible, doesn't model reality — it is or closely approaches reality and best takes into account *all* the known *and* unknown variables and interactions.

Simulation, though perhaps cheaper on the surface or initially, often won't even account for all the known parameters. This is important since even, sometimes, with great experience, it is hard to *really* know what is critical to account for — and then there are unexpected and unknown influences.

Even the best and seemingly most 'understood' of cases, simulation is still only approximate compared to a test. A well-

designed test truly tests the 'system' and accounts for 'everything' — whatever that is. Yes, a poor test can be misleading, and simulation can lay the groundwork for a good test ... but, reality is the issue and seeking the genuine 'ground truth' yields the least uncertainty.

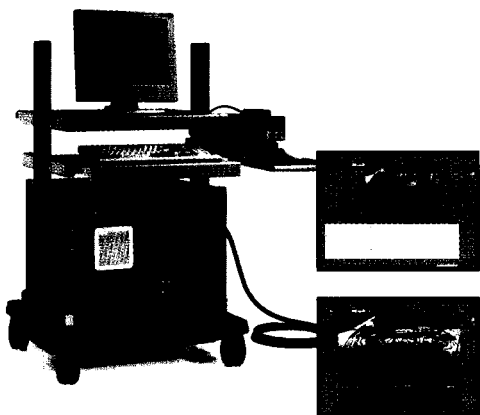
So, to me, testing *is* what is glamorous/desirable/rewarding/preferable:

- \* Being right, or at least the most right, the *first* time.
- \* The conceptual simplicity of testing the real thing (always some kind of a 'system') and getting the real, comprehensive answer.
- \* Not having to deal with unnecessary uncertainty or make assumptions.
- \* Establishing a baseline for future performance evaluations and 'improvements'.
- \* Getting a surprise sometimes — and either having the *ah-ha* experience or puzzling over it till you figure it out.

That is most of it.

—Steve ■

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