

“Do the Simple Case First”

While always kind and courteous, Prof. Meindl did not spoil the child (or graduate student). In my first meeting with him, he gave me a recently published article to read and requested I come back next week prepared to discuss. I quickly realized the following week, as the heat seemingly increased in his office, that I had inadequately prepared.

For all future meetings, I had a written report with supporting material; that strongly encouraged habit has served me well throughout my career. Finally, the concepts we researched were complicated, full of advanced math and many variables, and had gotten to the point where

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most researchers would run sophisticated software modeling. However, one could quickly overcomplicate things to the point where insights and conclusions were lost in the immense amount of data and experiments. Prof. Meindl always preached, “Do the simple case first,” understand it fully, and derive the baseline trends and insights; then, add the layers of accuracy/complexity necessary to refine results.

—John C. Eble

About the Author

John C. Eble received his B.Comp.E. degree in 1993, M.S.E.E. degree in 1994, and Ph.D. degree in electrical engineering in 1999 from Georgia Tech. He is currently vice president of product marketing for Rambus Inc.’s memory interconnect chip business unit.

“Don’t Complicate, Simpicate!”

I still remember many of Prof. Meindl’s questions and pieces of advice and share them with my students. When thinking about picking a research topic or a task, he would ask, “What is your unfair advantage?” When coming up with a new design or proposal, he quoted one of his “wise friends”: “Don’t complicate, simpicate!” Meetings with Dr. Meindl always ended with an emotional fulfillment—a sense of surprise, accomplishment, and wonder. Put simply, meetings with him were a

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“gift,” and what a gift he was to all of us who knew him and those of us who were touched by his wisdom and kindness. He will be so deeply missed, but his legacy will live on.

—Azad Naeemi

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Azad Naeemi is a professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Georgia Tech. His research crosses the boundaries of materials, devices, circuits, and systems, investigating ICs based on conventional and emerging nanoscale devices and interconnects.

Remembering Our 1,000 1-Min Conversations

I miss my office in the Georgia Tech Microelectronics Research Center (MiRC). It is where I first heard Jim Meindl speak in 1992. I instantly liked his talk and approach to science and technology. His presentation was army crisp, direct, and impactful.

I came to work with Jim in several capacities over the next 25 years after our first meeting. My MiRC office was halfway between Jim’s director’s office and the faculty office in the two opposite corners of the MiRC. One of my memories is the 1,000 1-min conversations we had as he walked from one office to the other past my office. Jim would walk in and settle down in a chair, and one of us would say the first thing on our mind. The other would then give a concise, honest response. The topics included technology, people, history, and the issue of the day. After the response, we would smile, and he was off to his office. We would not say goodbye because the conversation was not over, just

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paused. I noticed that sometimes he would return the way he came, and he wasn’t just passing by.

When Jim stepped down as director of the Interconnect Focus Center, I quoted the legendary Lou Holtz in describing Jim. Lou’s rule number three for life is “Show people you care.” Jim was known for his caring. I recall one day when my wife Betsy came to pick me up at the MiRC. She was 20 min early, so she brought a book to read in the MiRC lobby outside of Jim’s office. Jim saw her sitting by herself and brought her a cup of coffee. He sat with her so that she would not be alone. When I arrived, we just smiled and parted. In truth, I don’t really miss my MiRC office. I miss Jim Meindl.

—Paul Kohl

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Paul Kohl is a Regents’ Professor and Thomas L. Gossage Chair Professor in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at Georgia Tech.