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IT Eminent Lecture Series

The Computer Scientist As Toolsmith**Frederick Brooks**

Kenan Professor of Computer Science, Department of Computer Science, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Howe-Russell E130
March 08, 2004 - 03:00 pm

Abstract:

Computer Science is a discipline misnamed—we do not study nature; we make things. Mostly, we make things for people to use as tools. I don't propose renaming, but want to raise conscious mental defenses against the subconscious attitudes engendered by thinking of ourselves as scientists. The most important of these defenses are a continual focus on our users and a continual evaluation of our progress by their successes. Making things has its own glories and joys, and they are different from those of the mathematician and those of the scientist. We need to reflect together on these in a fundamental way.

Speaker's Bio:

Frederick P. Brooks, Jr., is Kenan Professor of Computer Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was an architect of the IBM Stretch and Harvest computers. He was Corporate Project Manager for the System/360, including development of the System/360 computer family hardware, and the Operating System/360 software. He founded the Department of Computer Science in 1964 and chaired it for 20 years. His research there has been in computer architecture, software engineering, and interactive 3-D computer graphics ("virtual reality"). His best-known books are *The Mythical Man-Month: Essays on Software Engineering*, and *Computer Architecture: Concepts and Evolution* (with G.A. Blaauw, 1997). Dr. Brooks has received the National Medal of Technology, the Bower Award and Prize of the Franklin Institute, the John von Neumann Medal of the IEEE, and the Allen Newell and Distinguished Service awards of the ACM.

This lecture has a reception.

