The Roman geologist Sulphurius Emanaceous was absolutely correct. Without geoscientists, there wouldn’t be ore bodies. Without ore bodies, there wouldn’t be mines. Without mines, there wouldn’t be a need for mining or processing engineers (the latter are also known as metallurgists). Without engineers, there wouldn’t be environmental issues and the need for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and most vendors. Could it possibly be any simpler? I know that some of you are engineers, so do you need me to slowly walk you through this logic?

The three pillars of mining — geology, mining and processing — become one big pillar with two stubby pillars.

Geoscientists carry a heavy burden with mankind being so dependent on our superhuman skills. But we also know that our genius makes the world a better place. Without our successes, humans would still live in caves (miners’ home turf). It gives us indescribable pleasure knowing that our hard work and ability to decipher nature’s secrets creates thousands of jobs for those less fortunate — people who would otherwise be using their college and graduate degrees working at fast-food restaurants.

But we are also humble and live normal lives despite being surrounded by the immense adulations of others. Mac Davis summed it up perfectly, “Oh Lord, it’s hard to be humble when you are perfect in every way.” This mantra guides us through every day.

However, we have an awesome obligation to mentor others in the mining industry. For instance, in this new age of environmental awareness, we have had to teach engineers that the best way to prevent forest fires is by not strip mining. Processing engineers must learn that the froth on a float cell is not a milkshake and that optimizing a flow sheet does not mean coloring within the lines. While most of you take your jobs for granite, we actually know what a granite is.

OEMs owe us twice. They get to use our newly discovered metals to build their toys for boys and then sell them to unsuspecting engineers.

Given our elite status in the world of mining, we would like to offer the following advice to our engineering brethren:

- If they are yawning at your presentation, it is not because they didn’t get enough sleep.
- You should not have more friends on the internet than in real life.
- Buying flowers for your girlfriend or upgrading your RAM is not a moral dilemma.
- You can write on paper that does not have both vertical and horizontal lines.

Seriously, everyone is important in the mining industry. We geoscientists are just more important. For instance, there is no god named Engin. There is one named Geos. Just saying.

So geoscientists unite! Let’s prove once and for all that we are the masters of the universe. Please vote with your wallet to help us win our self-ordained supremacy.

The Great Debate is intended to be a good-natured debate about the mining industry with a goal of raising funds for the U.S. National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and not necessarily of SME or Mining Engineering. Each edition of the Great Debate will be available on Mining Engineering’s website. To get involved in the debate, visit https://me.smenet.org/greatdebate/.

The Great Debate will continue through 2020 exclusively on the pages of Mining Engineering magazine and online at https://me.smenet.org/greatdebate/. To donate in the name of your favorite sector, go to bit.ly/Gr8Deb8 to make your vote count.
Let me start this discussion by reminding everyone that we are raising funds. Funds for a very worthy cause, the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum (NMHFM). I am calling your attention to the name: The National MINING Hall of Fame. Not the geoscientist hall of fame. Not the metallurgist hall of fame. The mining hall of fame. Geologists don’t need a hall of fame; their names already adorn every “do not serve” list in nearly every bar in America.

When Doug Silver asked me to write an article about the supremacy of miners, I was hesitant. Picking on metallurgists and geologists is always fun, but punching down always makes you feel a little dirty afterward. Like the way LeBron James probably feels when he plays a pickup game … with middle schoolers.

Since miners can be silver-tongued without needing to lick rocks, allow me to expound the virtues of our profession. While geoscientists are trained to play with crayons, and metallurgists play with bubbles, miners are experts at using complex modeling procedures, explosives and massive machines. Miners (like the rest of the world) recognize that an “IP anomaly” is a urinary tract infection, not another way to burn (pun intended) through cash. Miners also know that “unconformity” is the social behavior of a geologist when not in field camp. Don’t get me started on how badly they screwed up the word cleavage (my apologies to the women miners for that one).

Miners can be proud that Herbert Hoover (FYI to the emerging leaders, he was also the 31st president of the United States) was a miner that translated Agricola’s De Re Metallica from Latin to English. Hoover and Agricola are in the NMHFM, along with Hoover’s wife Lou, who partnered with him on the translation. A little-known fact from that translation is that the ratio 16:1 is not derived from precious metal prices. It was stated in De Re Metallica thusly: “XVI to I-Ratio autem a speciminibus geologist mineralibus suum sub ubi.” Herbert and Lou did not have the heart to include it in the translation, but it is time that the world knows the truth. The translation roughly states: “16 to 1 — the ratio of a geologist’s mineral specimens to his underwear.”

While metallurgists will wax on and on about how nothing happens without them, they do seem to ignore the fact that without miners, nothing is delivered to them. In actuality, though, if we delivered nothing, they would not be able to lose all the value held within the rock.

Now is the time for miners to come to the forefront and show their mettle (FYI to the emerging leaders, I didn’t misspell that word). We know we are the backbone of the industry. Miners don’t need to pat themselves on the back for a job well done, unlike our brethren who celebrate every time one of the 10,000 holes hit a little grade, or they pour an ounce of gold (after sending pounds of it to the tailings facility). Miners humbly accept that our job is to be the jack of all trades in the industry and guide and mentor the others. If the industry were the Beatles, McCartney, Lennon and Harrison would all be miners. The rest of you are Ringo.

So, I encourage you to donate today and often to the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum. Stand proud for your industry by putting your wallet to work. Geologists outnumber the miners 10 to 1, so we need a concerted effort. Do not let the fact that a huge percentage of those geologists are waiting tables in coffee shops deter you. Make us proud. More importantly, make us win!

To donate go to bit.ly/Gr8Debate to make your vote count.