Forward to the Fourth Edition

Second Revision: June 1, 2006.

Ten years ago I decided to write a book on serial communications using Visual Basic. Looking back, my initial ideas seem a little naive — though that may be somewhat harsh. I have learned so much in the succeeding years that I now know, well, more! The 2nd, 3rd, and now 4th Editions of this book have led me to the realization that I, as is true of most authors, never will know everything there is to know about a subject, and that I may not be as adept at communicating what they do know as I might like to be. Actually, I have been very pleased with the response to earlier editions. That has motivated me to add this one to the mix.

The Fourth Edition includes additional information, corrections, and elimination of some items that have lost relevance since the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Editions were published. In the four years since the 3rd Edition of the book (February, 2002), Visual Studio .NET has gone through three releases (VS .NET 2002 and VS.NET 2003 and Visual Studio 2005 released in November of 2005). Several of the companies featured earlier are no longer in business, and others have entered the marketplace.

I would like to thank all of the people who have contacted me with comments about and criticism of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Editions. I have been pleased that most of the feedback that I have received has been favorable. This has led me to devote the time required for this newer work. Much of the new example code that is included on the accompanying CD ROM was written at the behest of several readers. I hope that the improvements in the Fourth Edition meet my reader's needs.

This printing is the first undertaken without the help of Mabry Publishing, who published all previous versions. I certainly want to express my appreciation to James Shields and Ruth James of Mabry for their many hours of effort through the years.

I have updated the Introduction to reflect the additions and other changes that I have made in the book content. In fact, all areas of the book have received attention in the Fourth Edition; some will have noticeable changes, others are only cosmetic. All are designed to help you out.