

Professor Erich Lehmann, a major figure in the field of statistics, died on September 12, 2009, at the age of 91. Lehmann, who taught in Berkeley's Statistics Department, touched the lives of many people in statistics and beyond. He was a leading figure in the second generation of statisticians, following the establishment of the modern field by Neyman, Fisher and Wald before the Second World War. As is usual after a period of explosive innovation, confusion reigned. It was Lehmann's great talent to clear the fog and build a coherent theoretical structure. This was reflected in his great books, *Testing Statistical Hypotheses* (1959) and *Theory of Point Estimation* (1983), which were the centerpieces of graduate statistical education for most of the last half of the century, and have been translated into many languages. The books also added considerably to these theoretical structures, and his research advanced many other areas of theoretical statistics, including among many others:

- (i) concepts of dependence, starting a whole new literature,
- (ii) concepts of unbiasedness, again leading to a new literature
- (iii) rank-based nonparametric methods, in a series of papers many in collaboration with Joseph Hodges, Jr., with some surprising results
- (iv) illuminations of historical issues in statistical theory.

Lehmann achieved all the major honors awarded in the field and beyond: the prestigious Wald and Fisher lectureships, the presidency of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and the editorship of its main journal, *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*. He was granted a remarkable three Guggenheim Fellowships in 1955, 1966 and 1980 and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1975 and to the National Academy of Sciences in 1978. The Universities of Leiden and Chicago awarded him honorary doctorates. At Berkeley he held Miller Professorships twice and served reluctantly but very effectively as Department Chair.

Lehmann, born in Strasbourg, France in 1917, was raised in Frankfurt am Main, where his family had deep roots. . Fleeing the Nazis with his family in 1933, he graduated from high school in Switzerland and attended college in Cambridge, England. He enrolled in Berkeley as a graduate student in 1940 and never left, save for stints in the Air Force during World War II, when he was stationed in Guam, and leaves at Columbia, Princeton and Stanford. Obtaining his own Ph.D. in 1946, he embarked on a teaching career that included the supervision of more than 40 doctoral students of his own, several of whom became leaders in the next generation of statisticians. This achievement was due not only to his great scientific stature but also to remarkable personal qualities. He was kind and generous of spirit, had an unusual sensitivity to the feelings of others and a great astuteness about the world, what could be achieved, and how to do it. As a consequence his impact on his students and colleagues went well beyond the scientific. They honored him with a Festschrift (1983) for his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, a series of three Lehmann Symposia (1992,1994,1997), and a forthcoming volume of selected works.

In addition to his masterpieces, Lehmann published three important, less advanced texts: *Basic Concepts of Statistics* (with his longtime collaborator and friend J. L. Hodges, Jr.) *Nonparametrics: Statistics Based on Ranks*, and *Elements of Large Sample Theory*. After

a second edition of his classic *Testing Statistical Hypotheses* in 1986, he recruited young collaborators for further editions of his major texts - George Casella for *Estimation* in 1998 and Joe Romano for a third edition of *Testing* in 2005. These were major revisions that brought the books back to the frontiers of research. In his last decade he turned his energies to the history of the field in whose development he played such an important part, publishing his professional autobiography, *Reminiscences of a Statistician: The Company I Kept*, and an account of the productive rivalry between Fisher and Neyman, completed shortly before his death, to be published by Springer. He also enjoyed a lifelong passion for literature and in retirement translated stories by favorite authors such as Adalbert Stifter and Wilhelm Raabe, seeking to give them a wider audience than they previously enjoyed. At the time of his death he was working with Fritz Scholz, a former student, on a new edition of his *Nonparametrics* to be used in conjunction with the popular “R” statistical language.

He is survived by his wife, Juliet Popper Shaffer, and a loving blended family that includes his three children, Stephen, Barbara and Sophia; three step-children, Ron, Len and Tanya; eight grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren with a third on the way.

Donation in memory of Professor Lehman can be made on line at:  
<http://www.stat.berkeley.edu/52> or mailed to the Statistics Department at 367 Evans Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720 c/o Maria Torralba.