

Dr. R.L. Anderson - Department Founder and Distinguished Scholar

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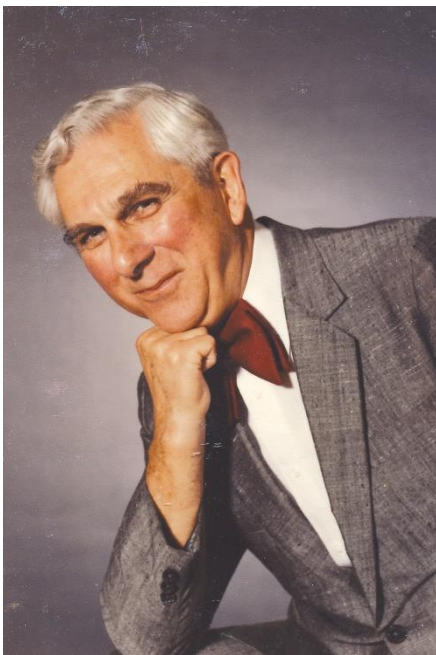
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Richard L. Anderson (1915–2003)

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Dr. Richard L. Anderson, one of the modern pioneer statisticians of the United States and a very active supporter of the American Statistical Association, died January 19, 2003, in Lexington, Kentucky, at age 87. An autobiographical sketch of Dr. Anderson appears in *The Making of Statisticians*. Dr. Anderson requested that we call him Dick. This article is to pay tribute to Dick for his many contributions to the field of statistics and remember him for his relationships with his family, students, and colleagues.

Academics



Dick attended high school in North Liberty, Indiana. After completing his high school education, he obtained his AB degree at DePauw University in 1936 and immediately entered graduate school at Iowa State University. He was fortunate to take courses from George Snedecor, William Cochran, and Gerhard Tintner, an outstanding econometrician who was Dick's dissertation director. He received his PhD degree in mathematics, statistics, and economics in 1941.

After graduation, Dick joined Gertrude M. Cox to help build a statistics program at North Carolina State University. The United States entered World War II soon after; in 1944, Dick began an 18-month stay with the Statistical Research Group at Princeton University. He worked with a very talented group of statisticians on methodology directed toward the war effort. Dick returned to North Carolina State in 1945. The program at North Carolina State developed into one of the more prominent statistics programs in the country. Dick was graduate administrator of the department from 1953 to 1966 and personally directed 26 PhD dissertations.

In 1967, Dick moved to the University of Kentucky to build a new statistics program. He served 12 years as chair of the department and directed the development of a new curriculum and the hiring of faculty. Dick continued to direct dissertation research in addition to his administrative and teaching duties.

In terms of PhD production per faculty member, the department became one of the top two or three departments in the University. Through joint appointments, service courses, and a consulting laboratory,

the department advanced the level of statistical methodology used throughout the University. In 1980, Dick became assistant to the dean for statistical services in the College of Agriculture, and in 1985 he retired from the University.

Dick had several visiting appointments during his career. He visited Purdue University in 1950, The London School of Economics in 1956, and the University of Georgia in 1966. In 1977 Dick visited Umea, Sweden, before serving a visiting professorship at The Indian Statistical Institute in New Delhi.

Consulting

One of Dick's great strengths was his uncanny ability to study a set of data and detect meaningful patterns. Few others have had such a highly developed intuition for data analysis. He was invited to consult on statistical matters in many countries including India, Egypt, Japan, Sweden, and England. Dick did not program computers, but he had definite ideas about what computer packages should do. He was a long-time member of the IMSL advisory board. He spent considerable time at UCLA collaborating with Wilford Dixon on the development of BMDP. SAS was born at North Carolina State, and Dick knew it well and contributed suggestions to its development.

In 1978, Dick, Dennis G. Haack, and Harley McKean, colleagues in the Department of Statistics, formed Statistical Consultants of Lexington. In 1981, Dennis left the University to work full time in this consulting venture, working for the company as vice president when he retired from the University. In addition to helping develop company policy, one of his major roles was to critique reports and recommendations to the company's clients. The company eventually merged with Clintrials, Inc. Dick retired from the company in 1998.

Honors and Service

Dick had a long association with the ASA. He was elected Fellow of the Association in 1951, was president in 1982, and received the Founder's Award in 1992. He was a member of the ASA's buy ativan pills Census Advisory Committee for six years. His presidential address, "Goals: Where Are We and Where Should We be Going," shows that he was sincerely interested in the future of statistics. Dick was also a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Institute for Mathematical Statistics. He was a member of the International Statistical Institute and the International Biometric Society; he served on the council of the latter.

The Legacy

Dick coauthored the well-known book, *Statistical Theory in Research*, one of the first books on linear models published. His research topics varied greatly. Early in his career, he published articles on econometrics. He was an expert on regression topics and he advanced the variance component estimation topic significantly. He enjoyed working with soil scientists on modeling commercial fertilizer response. In later years, he became interested in the statistical applications in the pharmaceutical industry. One topic of interest to him was the implications of paying subjects to participate in pharmaceutical trials as opposed to selecting potential subjects at random.

Dick devoted much of his long life to helping others in his profession. He instilled his philosophies of the importance of both the theory and practical aspects of statistics. He insisted on practical examples involving real-life data in the writings of his students and in his own publications. He had high standards for the performance of his students, and they respected him for it. Dick was very proud of the accomplishments of his students. He always said that the success of his students was his legacy to the world.

The Family

Dick was born on April 20, 1915, in North Liberty, Indiana, son of George William and Mabel Schrader Anderson. Dick helped his father on the farm, but he did not want to make a life of long hours and bitterly cold winters. He studied very hard to make sure that he did not have to go back to the farm. Dick came from a family of eight children, six of whom are still living. All were active professionals, including Virgil, a statistician.

Dick married Mary Turner in January 1946, shortly after returning to Raleigh from Princeton. In his autobiography, Dick describes Mary as a truly gracious and charming southern belle. Dick and Mary were constant companions; she accompanied him on almost all of his travels. Frequently, Dick told his colleagues that marrying Mary was the best thing he ever did. Kathryn H. Anderson (Kathy) was born in 1950. Dick was pleased that Kathy followed his early interest in economics and became a professor of economics at Vanderbilt University. William Bayard Anderson (Bill) was born in 1953. Dick and Bill had a comradery in both sports and politics. Kathy and Bill report that never in their lives have they heard Dick make an unkind remark about anyone (except umpires and referees). Bill is responsible for Dick's trademark bow tie. At about three years old, Bill wanted a tie like his dad's. The shortest tie Mary could find was too long for Bill. She bought them both bow ties, and Dick wore a bow tie from then on.

One cannot think of Dick without thinking of his enthusiasm for sports. He played tennis and softball as long as he was able. He would cheer in the den of his home in front of the TV just as though he were in the university stadium. He had his favorite teams and never missed an opportunity to watch one of their games. When he and Mary were out of town, they set the VCR to record programs football and basketball games so that he wouldn't miss out on any of them. The hospitality of Mary and Dick in their home was legendary; they hosted wonderful parties for graduate students and faculty.