

Cliff Spiegelman wins 2007 Sacks Award



Clifford Spiegelman
Texas A&M University

AWARD CITATION: For outstanding cross-disciplinary contributions to the statistical sciences, chemometrics, forensics, transportation and environmetrics.

RESPONSE FROM CLIFF:

I am honored to be the seventh winner of the Jerome Sacks award for many reasons. The first reason is that Jerry was my major professor and he is a mentor, colleague, and friend. The second reason is that my name is added to a unique list of statisticians who have contributed to the good name of our profession in diverse and important areas of application while contributing to the statistics profession.

NISS is the premier national institute promoting cross-disciplinary research. Jerry Sacks had a strong hand in creating this great organization. Jerry was chosen as its first director. Equally important, he passed the reins to a tremendously talented Alan Karr. NISS' unparalleled international leadership in computer experiments and cheminformatics are just a couple of examples of its preeminence.

In 1973, I started studying under Jerry's guidance. He arranged for me to work summers as a research assistant to Professor Donald T. Campbell who wanted a statistical student to help him with a new approach to experimental design that he called regression discontinuity. I also worked with a colleague of his, Professor Bob Buruch and many of Don and Bob's students. To make the story short, my main dissertation topic became analyzing something called fuzzy

regression. I published two well-referenced Annals of Statistics papers from my dissertation, one with Jerry.

I spent 9 years at the National Bureau of Standards (now NIST) working with distinguished physical scientists and engineers. These include notably Lloyd Currie, Robert Watters Jr., Emil Simiu, and Ted Prince. I also had a chance to coauthor papers with many distinguished statisticians. Only a fraction of them are mentioned here. They include Ray Carroll, Karen Kafadar, Ingram Olkin, John Rice, and Joan Rosenblatt. Jerry, George Knafl (another former student of Jerry's), Don Ylvisaker and I wrote a paper on nonparametric calibration while I was at NBS. In addition, Ray Carroll, Jerry, and I wrote a paper on parametric calibration. Jerry visited me several times at the NBS, and I am forever grateful for those visits.

While at the NBS I had an opportunity to work with other distinguished statisticians as well. They include Churchill Eisenhart and Joe Cameron. To this day, I remember their teachings that all scientific statements should be defensible in a mock court.

I have spent the last two decades at Texas A&M University. I have had tremendous support from my department heads and freedom to interact with distinguished scientists from around the world. Some of these distinguished scientists include environmental engineers Ron Henry at USC, and Phil Hopke at Clarkson, Bill Tobin, a forensic scientist, and Gerry Coté a biomedical engineer at Texas A&M who have become friends. Recently, I have had the privilege of working with Dennis James of the Texas A&M Chemistry Department.

Many of my statistical colleagues at Texas A&M are coauthors, and they have taught me a lot. I particularly thank Ray Carroll who recruited me and who even today is a source of inspiration, and Emanuel Parzen for encouraging me to think more deeply into the profession of statistics.

Finally, I am a senior research scientist at the Texas Transportation Institute where I have had the opportunity of a lifetime to help advance the statistics profession in transportation research. I particularly appreciate close working relationships at TTI with Larry Rilett, now a chaired distinguished professor at the University of Nebraska, Eyad Masad, a Texas A&M civil engineer, and my most frequent coauthor and former student Eun Sug Park.

I am profoundly honored to be a Jerome Sacks award winner.