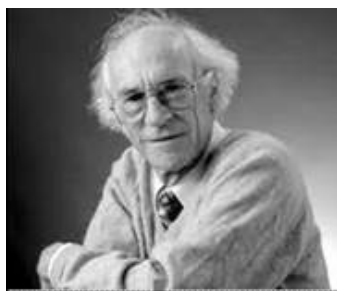


Vale David Vere-Jones --- 17 April 1936 – 31 October 2024



David was born in London in 1936 and moved with his family to New Zealand at the age of twelve where he completed his secondary education at Hutt Valley High School (was dux in 1953). He studied at Victoria University of Wellington and won a Rhodes scholarship to undertake postgraduate studies in Probability Theory at Oxford under the supervision of Professor David Kendall. His interest in statistics education was sparked in the mid-1960s when he spent a post-doctoral year in the Soviet Union and met some of the world's greatest probabilists. David was most impressed by this group, in particular

Boris Gnedenko who helped many countries in Eastern Europe re-establish their work on probability and statistics after the war and Andrey Kolmogorov who headed up a major review aimed at rationalizing school mathematics and sciences courses throughout the Soviet Union. No doubt seeing researchers at the highest level with such an involvement in, and commitment to, education was a model for David. He spent a significant part of his academic life not only on his own world class academic research but also doing a great deal for mathematics and statistical education, within New Zealand and on the wider international scene, with a special concern for developing countries.

David specialized in the prediction of earthquakes. In 1970 he was appointed Professor of Mathematics at the Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, with responsibility for teaching probability and statistics. His involvement in mathematics and statistics education grew through the 1970s being founding President of the New Zealand Mathematical Society from 1974-1975 and President of the New Zealand Statistical Association (NZSA) from 1981-1983. By the early 1980s he was heavily involved in New Zealand mathematics education committees. He also became very engaged with international mathematics and statistics bodies including the International Statistical Institute, ISI.

David chaired the ISI Education Committee from 1987-1991 and had a key role in organizing the 1988 ISI statistics education satellite conference to ICME-6 in Budapest and ICOTS-3, the International Conference on Teaching Statistics in Dunedin, 1990. Following ICOTS-3, it became clear that an international association for statistical education was needed. At the Council of the ISI, Cairo 1991, an interim committee, with David as Chair, was given the responsibility for establishing the International Association for Statistical Education, IASE. David's involvement in the IASE continued for a number of years including his enthralling keynote address at ICOTS-5 on the "Background Influences on The Development of Statistical Education". He also wrote an important paper in the 1995 ISI Review, "The coming of age of statistical education." There is little doubt that David's influence on statistics education was crucial to the creation of the IASE.

David was granted many awards including being elected a fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 1982. In 1995 he received the Henri Willem Methorst medal from the ISI and in 1999 the Rutherford Medal from the Royal Society of New Zealand, New Zealand's highest Scientific honour. In 2009 he received NZSA's most prestigious award, the Campbell Award. In 2014, he received the Royal Society of New Zealand's Jones Medal, "for his work in statistics, both his groundbreaking work on earthquake forecasting and his contribution to the teaching of statistics and mathematics ...".

David was a keen sportsman who loved tennis and tramping. He was very generous with his time and will be remembered as a wonderful mentor to many in New Zealand and around the world.

David retired in 2000 and helped set up the independent company "Statistics Research Associates Limited" where he was a director for number of years. He spent his final years in a retirement village in Waikanae in a lovely bush setting near Wellington. David and his wife Mary, who predeceased him, had three children and four grandchildren. He remained perceptive and thoughtful right to the end.

Written by Brian Phillips