

Patrick Moran, 1917-1988

Patrick Alfred Pierce Moran, universally known as Pat, was a giant in Australian statistics, known for both his original thinking and for his care for members of the statistical community.

Pat was born in Kings Cross, Sydney, on 14 July 1917, the son of an eminent doctor. At age 16 he entered the University of Sydney to study chemistry, zoology, physics and mathematics. We are fortunate that Pat did not follow the advice of the then Professor of Mathematics, H.S. Carslaw, that he “should choose some other career as he would not succeed as a mathematician”.

In 1937 he enrolled at St John’s College, Cambridge, to study mathematics. World War 2 intervened and in 1940 he took up a position in the Ministry of Supply, providing him with an introduction to the coming generation of British statisticians such as Maurice Bartlett. In 1943 he joined the Australian Scientific Liaison Office, working on numerous applied problems. This changed his career into being a statistician. When the war finished he chose to not complete his PhD at Cambridge, but to join the Institute of Statistics at Oxford University.

Pat’s career returned to Australia when he was invited to establish statistics as a discipline at the then new Australian National University. He remained as professor at the ANU for the next thirty years and during this period he supervised many students who became the leaders in Australian statistics for the following decades. His research output included four major books: *The Theory of Storage* (1959), *Statistical Processes of Evolutionary Theory* (1962), *Geometrical Probability* (1963) and *An Introduction to Probability Theory* (1967).

It was fitting that Pat was chosen as the inaugural President of the Statistical Society of Australia in 1963. It was one the many honours that Pat Moran received in his lifetime, a list that included being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. However the achievement he was most pleased with was seeing his protégés develop their own remarkable careers.

Hence it is fitting that the Statistical Society of Australia names its first Lecture series after Pat Moran.