

Christopher Robertson
Professor Emeritus of Statistics
UC Riverside
1942-2019

Christopher Robertson, Professor Emeritus of Statistics at UC Riverside (UCR) passed away on June 15, 2019, from multiple organ failure triggered by kidney disease.

Professor Robertson was born during World War II on March 23, 1942, in London, England. Shortly after the London Blitz bombings, Professor Robertson and his parents were evacuated from London to the village of Laleham on the River Thames. Growing up, Professor Robertson enjoyed the classical education of Westminster School, but his first love was always the theory and application of mathematics. He received his B.A. in Mathematics with high honors from Trinity College, University of Cambridge. He also received the intensive statistical education of the Cambridge Diploma in Mathematical Statistics.

Professor Robertson's professional career started as a Staff Scientist with the British Coal Utilisation Research Association where he worked with physicists, chemists, and chemical engineers on the mathematical and statistical problems resulting from their work. During that time, he was recruited as a Lecturer in Mathematical Statistics at the University of Exeter in England where he received his Ph.D. in Mathematics in 1969. His dissertation was on statistical topics, with application to the relationship between low birth weight and infant mortality. He never attended Exeter University as a student, but obtained the Ph.D. for research done while a faculty member.

Through a contact initiated by Egon Pearson, a member of his dissertation committee, Professor Robertson was recruited by UCR Professor Emeritus Florence Nightingale David to come to the then-new UCR Statistics Department as a visiting professor in 1970. He eventually became a tenured faculty member in 1976 and remained a faculty member at UCR for 32 years.

Throughout his long career, Professor Robertson's interests included parametric estimation, distribution theory, probability (including probability models), and stochastic processes. He taught nearly all of the upper division courses, including courses aimed at statistics majors, as well as service courses primarily taken by engineering, computer science, and premed students. For more than two decades, Professor Robertson was an undergraduate and graduate student advisor and served on a number of departmental, college, and campus committees.

In 1980, Professor Robertson met his future wife, Alix, who was a graduate student in Economics at UC Riverside. They were married in 1983, and enjoyed many happy years together. In addition to statistics, they had a shared passion for nature, music, language, and literature. They enjoyed nature walks at local botanic gardens and nature reserves, and during their annual vacations at the Point Reyes National Seashore in Northern California.

After his retirement from UC Riverside in 2003, Professor Robertson and Alix moved to Livermore, Calif. During his retirement, he spent many happy hours investigating mathematical problems, sometimes playing with his hobbyist license for Mathematica to see what the software could and could not do. He renewed his pianist ability, playing the solo piano works of Chopin, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and other composers. And he read widely, collecting an extensive library on mathematics, history, and the British countryside.

Professor Robertson is survived by his wife Alix of 35 years.

Adapted from an obituary provided by the Department of Statistics with edits by Katja Guenther.