

[Institute of Mathematical Statistics](#)

Fostering the development and dissemination of the theory and applications of statistics and probability

[Renew / Join IMS](#)

Obituary: Bruce Trumbo 1938–2022

February 15, 2023

Bruce Trumbo

On July 8, 2022, Dr. Bruce E. Trumbo, Professor Emeritus of Statistics and Biostatistics at California State University East Bay passed away. He was 84 years old.

Bruce Trumbo was a nationally and internationally recognized contributor to the field of Statistics. Bruce was a fellow of both the American Statistical Association and the IMS. He received the ASA Founders Award, “for his vision about the importance computers would play in research and laying the groundwork for these changes at the National Science Foundation (NSF), for leadership in solving problems related to establishing a computer-searchable version of *Current Index to Statistics (CIS)*, for excellence in teaching including using real data, for providing indexes for the major statistical journals, for inspiring students of statistics in other disciplines, and for outstanding service to ASA.” Bruce received the first IMS Carver Medal in 2002 for his contributions to the Institute and to the statistics profession. His selection for this award recognized his performance as an advocate for statistical science through his work for the federal government, contributions to establishing a widely used computer-searchable index of statistical publications, service as editor of several statistical publications, service as a member of policy-making committees of statistical societies, and contributions to the use of computers in the education of statisticians. Bruce served two terms as editor of the *CIS*, and oversaw its transition from printed paper volumes to a computerized searchable index. In 1994 he received the ASA Board of Directors’ Certificate of Appreciation, “in recognition of his vision in extending the scope of the *Current Index to Statistics* and for introducing new electronic products.” In 1998 Bruce again received this Certificate, “for outstanding contributions to the Association and the statistics profession through exemplary service as Editor of *AMSTAT online* from 1996–1998.”

Three times, early in his career, Bruce took year-long leaves of absence from the university to work at NSF for the Division of Mathematical Science, serving as Program Director for Statistical Research. Through his leadership, many academic statisticians who previously might not have received funding were awarded NSF grants dedicated to integrating computational statistics with applied and theoretical research. Additionally, he worked to ensure that women statisticians were hired in this position following his terms, and he helped to appoint women into many important positions at the national level.

Bruce was the author of two books. *Learning Statistics with Real Data* (2001) was translated into Chinese by a former student. *Introduction to Probability Simulation and Gibbs Sampling with R* (2010), coauthored with a former student and colleague, included chapters on the Bayesian analysis of medical testing with uncertainty. Bruce published many papers, articles, and conference papers, several related to classroom presentation of statistical ideas. Some of his early research focused on adding color to maps, which was original work and early in this field. Bruce was awarded several grants that provided learning opportunities for his students.

Bruce joined California State College at Hayward (CSUH) in 1964 (later CSU Hayward, now CSU East Bay), having spent the previous year teaching in the Mathematics Department at San Jose State University while completing his PhD in Statistics from the University of Chicago. After joining the CSUH faculty, he helped develop the newly formed Statistics Department’s undergraduate and Master’s-level graduate curriculum. His students benefited professionally from his insights into Statistics and from his dedication to life-long learning, which allowed him to keep up with ever-changing technology. His efforts ensured his students were prepared to enter the job market locally, nationally, or internationally or to pursue PhDs immediately upon graduating. Bruce loved to teach and devoted his life to teaching and learning. His teaching spanned seven decades. Bruce continued to teach on the website math.stackexchange.com as BruceET, answering over 3,000 probability and statistics questions; he often included R code for

demonstration purposes. Through these efforts, he earned 49,382 reputation points, placing him in the top 0.48% overall. His impact was impressive: he reached ~2.6 million people.

Bruce was dedicated to the field of Statistics and to the Department of Statistics and Biostatistics at CSUEB; his professional efforts will have a lasting impact on the field. He was an inspiring teacher, mentor, co-author, and friend to generations of students, faculty, and Department Chairs.

Bruce served with distinction as a faculty member. He was elected to and served many terms on the Academic Senate. For many terms, he served on or chaired the Faculty Affairs Committee. Early in his career, he served for a year in the President's Office, and he served as Department Chair for one term. Bruce was an active member of all Department committees, and he served on various College committees. Bruce received the George and Miriam Phillips Outstanding Professor of the Year award in 2003–04, honoring his contributions to students and academics; he received the Sue Shaffer Award for service to faculty in 2009–10. He was a pioneering faculty member whose faithful service on committees at every level of the University, and professional attention through providing individual mentoring, ensured faculty success in achieving tenure and promotions, publishing, and enhancing teaching techniques.

The **Bruce E. Trumbo Scholarship Endowment Fund** was established in 2008. This scholarship has been awarded 14 times in recognition of academic excellence and other related achievements in support of current students in the Department of Statistics and Biostatistics. Anyone wishing to make a contribution in Bruce's memory can do so by sending a check payable to: Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation, with the following notation at the bottom of the check: *Statistics and Biostatistics Department, Trumbo Scholarship*. The check should be mailed to: Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation, University Advancement, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward, CA 94542-9988. To donate online, visit the CSUEB secure online giving site: <https://www.csueastbay.edu/giving/how-to-make-a-gift.html>, select "Direct my gift to: SCHOLARSHIP – SCI" and select "The Bruce E. Trumbo Scholarship Endowment Fund."

Written by Eric Suess, Professor; Julie Norton, Professor Emeritus; Ayona Chatterjee, Department Chair; and Ann Cambra, staff (retired); all from the Department of Statistics and Biostatistics, California State University East Bay.

Institute of Mathematical Statistics
toll free (US): 877.557.4674
tel: 216.295.2340
fax: 216.295.5661
email: ims@imstat.org
© 2025 Institute of Mathematical Statistics

Website by [Sunray Computer](#)
[✉ Contact Us](#)



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Site Map](#)