Highlights

A Master of Minds

Professor Xiru Chen made far-reaching and wide-ranging contributions to many topics in theoretical statistics, and was one of the greatest statisticians of our time. His ground breaking and fundamental contributions to statistics were recognized by a National Prize in Natural Science in 1991 and a Natural Science Prize of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1998. He was also elected to the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1997 and became a fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics in 2002.

Professor Chen was widely recognized as a deep thinker, professional leader, and beloved educator, particularly in China, where he was instrumental in promoting and disseminating statistical research and studies. He was a founder of the Center for Statistical Research in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and served as the inaugural chairman of the academic committee for only a month before he passed away. His book, *Introduction to Mathematical Statistics*, has fostered generations of statisticians in China since its first publication in 1981. The book is full of statistical thinking, mathematical insights, methodological power and statistical reasoning, which exemplify the wisdom and knowledge of a great master. Of the first eighteen PhD degrees ever granted in mainland China in 1981, remarkably, Professor Chen supervised three of them (Drs. Zhidong Bai, Chun Su, and Lincheng Zhao).

Professor Chen was also well known for his warm and caring character. Despite high international distinction and remarkable achievements, he was extremely friendly, helpful, and approachable. In this issue, three distinguished articles among many accepted submissions have been selected to commemorate Professor Xiru Chen's distinguished career and noble character. These articles are only a small reflection of Professor Chen's influence on younger generations in the areas where he was an undisputable international authority. On behalf of the International Chinese Statistical Association, I express my deep grief for the loss of a personal friend and teacher, and my great sorrow to our profession for the loss of a great statistics thinker and believer (我為失去一位良師益友而悲，為學界失去一位大師而痛).

— **Jianqing Fan**

Xiru Chen (1934-2005) graduated from the Department of Mathematics, Wuhan University in 1956 and became an assistant research fellow at the Institute of Mathematics, Chinese Academy of Sciences in 1956. He later joined the faculty at the University of Science and Technology of China in 1960, and had worked with the graduate institute of Chinese Academy of Sciences since 1986. He was the founder and first Co-president of the Chinese Society of Probability and Statistics in 1980. He served on the editorial boards for nine statistical and mathematical journals in China and overseas, and served as a fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. He published more than 130 papers in respected journals along with fourteen monographs and textbooks. His work made significant contributions to asymptotic theory in linear models, Berry-Essen bounds and Edgeworth expansion, limit theorems for U-statistics, nonparametric statistics, and smoothing in nonparametric regression. He was one of the pioneer researchers dedicated to research- and teaching-based development in theoretical statistics after the Cultural Revolution. Since 1980, he organized several workshops introducing advanced statistical methodologies that not only fostered hundreds of young minds, but also marked a development milestone for statistics in the mainland. People of several generations still owe gratitude for his generous help during a critical period of their career development. His academic descendants are now playing important roles in promoting statistics in all fields not only in the mainland, but also elsewhere in the world. Xiru Chen devoted his entire life to academic endeavour and statistical education, and will be well remembered by his students, colleagues, friends and statisticians at large.