

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

MEYER ABRAHAM GIRSHICK (1908 - 1955)

Professor Meyer Abraham Girshick died on March 2 at the Palo Alto Hospital after an illness of several months.

Professor Girshick was born in Russia on July 25, 1908. He came to New York City at the age of 15 in 1923. The principal of the elementary school he attended in New York was Angelo Patri who took a strong interest in the boy and, after he graduated from high school in 1929, intervened personally to get him admitted to Columbia College. In 1934, he entered graduate school at Columbia University to work with Professor Harold Hotelling, who arranged a stipend from a Carnegie Foundation grant.

He left Columbia in June 1937 to begin a very distinguished career in government service. For the next ten years he held positions in several government or government-sponsored agencies including the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agriculture, the Statistical Research Group at Columbia University, the Bureau of the Census, and the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica. He joined the faculty at Stanford University as Professor of Statistics in 1948. He was a member of several professional societies and was president of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.

He is survived by his wife, Mary K. Girshick, whom he married on May 24, 1932, and by his daughter Paula who was born April 13, 1939.

Professor Girshick has made a lasting mark on several different branches of mathematical statistics. His contributions in all the fields in which he has worked have already shown their enduring value. His work has been marked by continuous attention to applications, as well as the fundamental theory, and evinces the beneficial cross-fertilization of the two.

His earliest work was in the field of multivariate statistical analysis, where he made important contributions to the sampling theory of the roots of the determinantal equations. While at the Department of Agriculture he applied his work to a study of body measurements of American boys and girls.

As a result of his participation in the Statistical Research Group, he became greatly interested in the sequential analysis of statistical data then being developed by Abraham Wald and others. He made a number of important specific applications of the method, and contributed a fundamental innovation in determining the operating characteristics of sequential sampling plans. Alone, and in collaboration with others, he studied some of the estimation and probability problems arising as a by-product of sequential analysis. His interest in sequential analysis merged into a broader interest in statistical decision theory, which relates to the foundation of statistical inference both in the non-sequential and the sequential cases. This work, in collaboration with others, restated many classical statistical procedures from a more fundamental

point of view, and culminated in the studies of the invariance properties of statistical tests, which have yet to be published. Much of his work was embodied in the book "Theory of Games and Statistical Decisions" which he wrote in collaboration with David Blackwell.

An example of what may represent Professor Girshick's outstanding characteristic was his ability to make himself the center of a beehive of activity. Whenever a colleague or student thought of some promising idea, he would automatically go to Professor Girshick who would rapidly digest the idea and extend it in unexpected directions. One could always count on his interest and advice in the work one was doing. These qualities made the Department of Statistics a working group whose interrelated activities led to increased accomplishments and satisfaction for all. There is very little that has been produced by the Statistics Department which does not represent his ideas or his spirit. His warm, enthusiastic interest in scholarly work led many workers in different fields to seek him out as a collaborator. Our grief at his loss is shared by workers in many different disciplines all over the country.

Albert H. Bowker, Chairman
Kenneth J. Arrow
Herman Chernoff