Obituary: Bishnoedath Leo Raktoe

1932–2009

Professor B. Leo Raktoe, a former Professor of Statistics in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, passed away on Friday, November 13, 2009 in Singapore, where he had settled since 1997.

Professor Raktoe was born in Paramaribo, Surinam, on August 2, 1932. He received his preliminary education in Paramaribo and then went on to study at the State College for Tropical Agriculture in Deventer, The Netherlands, where he received a Diploma in Tropical Agriculture in 1952. From 1953 to 1960 he worked as an Agricultural Technical Officer in the Ministry of Agriculture in Paramaribo.

Starting in 1961, he undertook postgraduate study in statistics at Cornell University, earning a doctorate in 1964, with a major in Biometry and minors in Economics and Social Statistics.

After a two year appointment with the FAO/UN in Colonia, Uruguay, Raktoe joined the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, as an Associate Professor of Statistics in 1967 and embarked on a teaching and research career. He was promoted to Full Professor in 1970 and he continued his tenure at Guelph until 1980. At Guelph, he helped develop the undergraduate and master's graduate programs in statistics.

From 1980 to his retirement in 1997, Professor Raktoe travelled extensively, teaching and carrying out collaborative research at various universities for periods of two to three years, in Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Jamaica, Trinidad and South Africa.

While Professor Raktoe had research interests in many areas of statistics, his principal research activity was in the area of design and analysis of experiments; an area in which he authored or co-authored in excess of sixty papers. He published in leading journals such as the Annals of Mathematical Statistics, Annals of Statistics, the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, the Journal of the American Statistical Association, the Annals of the Institute of Statistical Mathematics and the Journal of Statistical Planning and Inference. Raktoe also co-authored two books: Basic Applied Statistics (Marcel Dekker Inc., 1979, with J. J. Hubert) and a monograph, Factorial Designs (John Wiley and Sons, Probability and Mathematical Statistics Series, 1981, with A. Hedayat and W. T. Federer). The latter book has been heavily referenced in the literature of statistical design.

Professor Raktoe was a Fellow of the American Statistical Association (1971), a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society (1972), a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (1975) and an elected Member of the International Statistical Institute (1974).

Professor Raktoe was a great mentor, teacher and researcher and above all, a great colleague and friend. He will be missed.

By Hosh Pesotan and Radhey S. Singh,
University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada