

## SELECTED RECOLLECTIONS OF MY RELATIONSHIP WITH LEO BREIMAN

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During the period 1962–1964, I had a tenure track Assistant Professorship in Mathematics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, where I did research in probability theory, especially on linear diffusion processes. Being somewhat lonely there and not liking the cold winter weather, I decided around the beginning of 1964 to try to get a job in the Mathematics Department at UCLA, in the city in which I was born and raised. At that time, Leo Breiman was an Associate Professor in that department. Presumably, he liked my research on linear diffusion processes and other research as well, since the department offered me a tenure track Assistant Professorship, which I happily accepted. During the Summer of 1965, I worked on various projects with Sidney Port, then at RAND Corporation, especially on random walks and related material. I was promoted to Associate Professor, effective in Fall, 1966, presumably thanks in part to Leo. Early in 1966, I was surprised to be asked by Leo to participate in a department meeting called to discuss the possible hiring of Sidney. The conclusion was that Sidney was hired as Associate Professor in the department, as of Fall, 1966. Leo communicated to me his view that he thought that Sidney and I worked well together, which is why he had urged the department to hire Sidney. Anyhow, Sidney and I had a very fruitful and enjoyable collaboration in probability and, to a much lesser extent, in theoretical statistics, for a number of years thereafter.

In 1967, Leo decided to leave academia in order to become a full-time consultant. The purported reason, as I heard it, was that he wanted to devote his attention to studying how children tackle math problems. I then had virtually no contact with him for a number of years. I did hear that he ran for and got elected to the Santa Monica Board of Education. He was then elected President of the Board. This constrained his available time for consulting at Technology Service Corporation, where he was now their full time consultant. So I got a call from TSC asking if I would like to consult for them, which I did.

At TSC, Breiman had been working with its employees (mainly John Gins, a programmer and statistician) and with Jerry Friedman on tree-structured classification and regression. I joined that effort. Previous efforts, such as AID, had used the hypothesis testing framework to determine when to stop growing a tree. I wasn't exactly enamored with this approach. Breiman and I developed an alternative approach based on tree growing, followed by tree pruning, by analogy with