

OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY

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Prior to 1920, a scant half-dozen American colleges and universities had, as a member of the department of mathematics, anyone who was seriously interested in a newly developing method of scientific inference called Mathematical Statistics. In the decade that followed, spurred perhaps in part by the first World War, there was a marked increase in the number of graduate students of mathematics who found mathematical statistics to be a challenging and rewarding field of study. But the problem of publication was quite acute. On the one hand, the relatively large American Statistical Association was, at that time, quite effectively dominated by persons who vigorously objected to having their *Journal* cluttered up with a lot of meaningless symbols. On the other hand, the august American Mathematical Society took a very dim view of the whole business and looked upon these mavericks with a suspicion of quackery. Although most mathematical statisticians were members of both of these societies, it was fairly clear that access to the publications of these societies was too restrictive to represent a healthy situation. In a rare and generous move, Harry C. Carver founded and personally financed a new journal that he named *The Annals of Mathematical Statistics*. Volume One appeared in 1930. In fairness to the American Statistical Association, it should be remarked that a few years later the *Annals* became affiliated with that Society.

By 1934 there was a group of reasonable size (made up of persons in government, in industry, and in the colleges and universities) that felt the interests of mathematical statistics could better be served if we had a society and a journal of our own. The Editor volunteered to make his *Annals* the official journal of such a society and in fact to turn over the publication of the *Annals* to the new society as soon as it was able to carry the burden. Preliminary conversations and correspondence concerning the organization of a society of mathematical statistics soon showed that people were far from unanimous as to what should be the nature of the organization. Some thought of a statistician of that day as a specialist much like an actuary; and accordingly it was urged that membership in the society should be graded and should be awarded on the basis of written examinations. A survey revealed the obvious: that practically everyone would be willing to give examinations but virtually no one would take them. A compromise was worked out whereby the general plan of organization of the new society would be along the lines of the Mathematical Society but there would be two grades of membership, namely, Members and Fellows. Thus, on September 12, 1935, at Ann Arbor a constitution and by-laws were adopted and The Institute of Mathematical Statistics was formally organized. Henry Lewis Rietz was chosen to be the first president.

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