

## HARALD CRAMÉR 1893–1985

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Harald Cramér died on October 5, 1985. He was a great scientist and a good man.

### 1. Harald Cramér—his life.

1.1. I had my last conversation with my teacher and friend, Harald Cramér in April 1985 when I visited him in his attic apartment in an old house in beautiful Djurgården, outside Stockholm. He had moved there after the death of his beloved wife. There were books in all corners. I admired the view across the water to the north and to the south. Ships passed on their way to and from the Stockholm harbour. However, Harald could not discern them, for his eyesight was failing. He was also nearly deaf. But his intellect was clear and his memory excellent. We spoke about things old and new. I showed him some research papers recently written by young Swedish research workers, and he was actively interested in everything. But there was melancholy in the air, and I think we both felt that it was the last time.

1.2. Harald Cramér was born on September 25, 1893, in Stockholm. In 1918 he married Marta Hanssow. She died in 1973. They had one daughter, Marie-Louise, who lives in Finland, and two sons, Tomas and Kim, who live in Stockholm.

1.3. Cramér began his studies at the University of Stockholm in 1912, and was particularly interested in chemistry and mathematics. During 1913–1914 he was a research assistant in biochemistry and published his first paper together with H. von Euler, later a Nobel laureate [1]. (The numbers in square brackets refer to the bibliography at the end of the paper.)

Cramér soon abandoned chemistry for mathematics and received a Ph.D. in 1917 for a thesis on Dirichlet series [6]. He was an assistant professor of mathematics from 1917–1929 at the University of Stockholm.

1.4. In the years before 1920, Cramér became interested in insurance, especially in problems connected with the risk of ruin of an insurance business. In 1919 he held a short appointment at Försäkringsinspektionen (Swedish Private Insurance Supervisory Service). I would guess it was there that he first become acquainted with the ruin problem. From 1920–1948 he was an actuary, first for the life insurance company Svenska livförsäkringsbolaget, and from 1929 on for the reinsurance company Sverige. From 1949–1961 he was a consulting actuary for Sverige.

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