BIOGRAPHY

Thomas S. Ferguson

Thomas Shelburne Ferguson was born in Oakland, California, on December 14, 1929. He grew up in Alameda near San Francisco, where he received his high school education.

In 1947 he entered University of California at Berkeley to study Mathematics. He soon became interested in the three subjects to which he stayed faithful ever since: Probability, Statistics and Game Theory.

He earned his Ph.D. from Berkeley in 1956. His thesis consisted of two parts:

1. Best asymptotic normal estimation.
2. Existence of linear regression in structural equations.

His supervisor was Lucien Le Cam (see also the following note). Other distinguished names in the scientific environment in which Ferguson's talent was able to grow were Jerzy Neyman, Erich Lehmann, Michel Loève and David Blackwell. Blackwell (see also Blackwell's article in this volume) was fundamental in stimulating Tom's interest in game theory.

After his Ph.D., Tom first taught at UC Berkeley. One year later he joined the faculty of the Mathematics Department at UCLA, where he made his career as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Full Professor, and where he is, now retired, still active today in both the Mathematics and the newly founded Statistics Department. Over his career he held visiting positions at Princeton University, at UC Berkeley, at MIT, and at ULB Brussels, and spent sabbaticals at Washington University, Bell Laboratories, UC Berkeley and ULB Brussels.

Tom's scientific contributions to Probability, Statistics and Game Theory are widespread. His first book *Mathematical Statistics - A Decision Theoretic Approach* was published in 1967 (Academic Press). Right from the beginning, it has been a great success. Some people called the book a *classic* reference in Statistics when the book was still fairly young. In many ways, this book has stayed remarkably young. He has also written a book on large sample theory (Chapman and Hall, (1996)), edited and co-edited three books, and authored or co-authored some sixty articles. He has some twenty Ph.D. students to his credit, mainly at UCLA, but also at Cornell.

When asked what he himself considers his most important contribution Tom suggests it may be the proof (with David Blackwell) of the *Big Match*, a well-known problem in Game Theory. But some colleagues would first point to the Ferguson prior or the Ferguson-Dirichlet process, others may evoke the