

Remembering Brian D. Marx

Brian D. Marx, an outstanding professor in the Dept. of Experimental Statistics at Louisiana State University, passed away on November 25, 2021, at his home, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, surrounded by his wife Alexandra, his son Leopold, and his mother, Diana. Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1960, Brian earned a B.S. in Physiology from Michigan State University in 1982, an M.A. in Statistics from Penn State in 1984, and a Ph.D. in Statistics from Virginia Tech in 1988. He joined the Department of Experimental Statistics in 1988 as an Assistant Professor, and he climbed swiftly and steadily through the ranks to become Professor of Statistics in 1999. During his tenure, he was the major professor to more than 60 M.A. students. At the same time, he was the recipient of two awards for teaching excellence.

Brian had a distinguished career with important and lasting contributions to statistics, particularly in nonparametric smoothing and signal regression. He is one of the two co-founders of Penalized B-splines (also called P-splines), a powerful and flexible smoothing tool and signal regression method widely used in many areas such as Chemometrics. According to Google Scholar, the landmark paper by Paul Eilers and Brian Marx (1996) has been cited over 3,800 times.

He was active in all aspects of the statistical community, including teaching, consulting, researching, mentoring, refereeing papers, doing editorial work, and sometimes taking over administrative duties. He also exercised the duties of Secretary, Vice President, and President of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Statistical Association. His vita references 80 refereed journal articles and 25 refereed proceeding publications in which he was a primary author or co-author. He was the author of three books, the latest one

being *Practical Smoothing: The Joys of P-splines* (2021, Cambridge University Press), a jewel that just appeared in print. He is also one of the leading contributing authors for the JOPS (Joys of P-splines) R package, a companion to his latest book.

Brian was a passionate speaker. He was a Visiting Lecturer at Stanford University (1994-1995) and Utrecht University, Netherlands (1995). He gave talks and taught short courses at numerous meetings and Colleges in the U.S. He also traveled extensively to Europe, where he gave lectures and taught short courses in most EU countries. Brian was an Initiator and had been an Editor and Coordinator Editor of the important journal *Statistical Modelling* since 2000. Brian was a strong supporter of the International Workshop on Statistical Modelling and faithfully attended the yearly event since 1989. He was the organizer of the 1998 Workshop held in New Orleans. In acknowledgment of his contributions to Statistics, Brian was named an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute in 2017 and a Fellow of the American Statistical Association in 2018. In working with Brian, one would soon realize that he was an early bird, doing his share of the work on time or earlier than expected. It seems to us that he also left this world way too early. We will miss him immensely as a friend and as a collaborator.