

George Judge Turns 80

The following is a tribute to UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus George Judge written by his colleague, Maximilian Auffhammer, in honor of Professor Judge on his 80th birthday. Ê



For those of us who have the privilege of interacting with George Judge, Professor in the Graduate School at UC Berkeley, it is hard to believe that he turned 80 on May 2, 2005.

George was born on a Carlisle, Kentucky farm in 1925. After serving in the Air Force during the last two years of WWII on Siapan Island, which involved thirty B-29 missions over Japan between November 1944 and May 1945, he received his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Kentucky in 1948. Four years later, he earned his Ph.D. in economics and statistics from Iowa State University. As is typical for George, he wasted no time and accepted an appointment as assistant professor at the University of Connecticut in 1951. He moved on to a position as full professor at Oklahoma State University in 1955. After a visit to Yale University, he moved to the University of Illinois, where he stayed until 1986. George visited the UC Berkeley economics department in 1970. He must have liked the golf courses, since he was appointed a full professor of agricultural and resource economics in 1986 and has been an active member of the faculty ever since.

George has published more than 150 research papers in the leading research journals. His research program has changed the way we use information in situations which involve making decisions in the face of uncertainty. Specifically, George has generated a basis for squeezing information out of samples of data so farmers, firms, individuals and policymakers can make optimal use out of the available data. Early on in his career, he helped establish a framework for determining the optimal number of birds per square foot of coop space. His very first paper helped farmers determine

the optimal size of broilers considering inputs and the price of the birds. His work in spatial economics provided a method which was used to determine the optimal routing of box cars, airport location and the location of slaughter and distribution plants. His work on Markov processes helped explain the size distribution as well as scale economies of firms, and informed us about the equilibrium distribution of firms.

George Judge has truly changed the way we think about estimation and inference to this day. He has literally and figuratively written the book on econometrics. His undergraduate and graduate textbooks to this day serve as the main instructional and reference works for most graduate programs. His clear treatment, which is always accompanied by enlightening practical applications, has reserved these books a permanent spot in any applied economist's library.

Although his research contributions are extensive and impressive, George's greatest contribution to the discipline of economics is his ability to inspire young researchers at various stages of their career. As part of his birthday celebration, Assistant Professor Sofia Villas-Boas sent out an old set of "economists baseball cards" issued in the 1980s to the depicted economists and had them autographed and returned. The numerous letters accompanying the cards are witness to the tremendous respect and friendship George has garnered during his ongoing career. We are extremely lucky to have George as a colleague. He is a source of advice, inspiration and, most importantly, a positive outlook. Happy Birthday, George!

For those of you who wonder what George did on the day of his 80th birthday—he came to the office and read a 70-page paper on divergence estimators.