



Obituary

Lars Lyberg was born near Stockholm on 1 December 1944 and spent much of his life in Stockholm.

He studied statistics at Stockholm University where he gained a Doctorate under the supervision of Tore Dalenius, an early innovator in survey statistics. Like most Swedes he also had a stint of military service. He started his professional work career at Statistics Sweden in 1966 and spent the next 44 years there, culminating in his appointment as head of the Research and Development Department.

Since retiring from Statistics Sweden, he worked as a consultant in survey methods and quality management. Since 2003 he taught at Stockholm University with professorial status in recognition of his past contributions. He continued teaching post retirement.

Some of his notable contributions include:

- Developer and Founding Editor of the Journal of Official Statistics in 1985 which continues to perform strongly with a high impact factor. He was Editor-in-Chief for 25 years.
- Elected President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians for 2 years from 1993 to 1995.
- Elected member of the International Statistical Institute.
- Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society.
- Fellow of the American Statistical Association.
- Chair of Survey Methods Section at American Statistical Association.
- Represented Sweden in the development of ISO Standard 20252 on Market, Opinion and Social Research.
- Taught methodology issues in the survey field in over ten countries.
- Member of the European Statistical Governance Advisory Board.

Lars wrote or edited twelve books, eight in the Wiley series in Survey Methodology. These latter include Data Quality Assurance (1977), Telephone Survey Methodology (1988), Measurement Errors in Surveys (1991), Survey Measurement and Process Quality (1997), Introduction to Survey Quality (2003), Survey Methods in Multicultural, Multinational, and Multiregional Contexts (2010), and Total

Survey Error in Practice (2017). The 2010 book won the 2013 American Association in Public Opinion Research's Book Award which recognizes 'books that have influenced our understanding of public opinion or survey research methodology'. His latest contributions include Big Data Meets Survey Science: A Collection of Innovative Methods (2020) and a yet to be published volume on computational social science. Lars also wrote numerous journal articles and book chapters on survey methods and quality. His work at the intersection of total survey error and survey quality has had a profound impact on how survey programs and organizations manage for survey quality.

Lars maintained active membership in:

- International Association for Survey Statisticians;
- International Association for Official Statistics;
- American Society for Quality;
- American Association for Public Opinion Research;
- American Statistical Association; and
- Swedish Statistical Society.

Lars was a very effective statistician at Statistics Sweden specialising in survey methods, but he was probably best known for his external contributions and international collaborations. Lars began his interest in international collaborations when his mentor, Dalenius, left Stockholm University to teach at Brown University in the US. Dalenius invited Lars to Brown and introduced him to US colleagues working in the field. Lars became a highly effective international collaborator who has been described as modest by nature, generous of his time to help others, and a mentor to many younger survey researchers. A long time colleague and friend recently wrote:

His leadership derived partly from his humility. He was quiet, always; listening, always. And when everyone had their say, he would invent ways to push good ideas forward. He would respect the idea and subordinate his role, if necessary, to promote the idea. Often, no one noticed he was leading us. One of the rarest, and thus most admirable, trait of scholars is humility.

There are three notably examples of where Lars organized and brought together survey researchers to examine critical research challenges facing the industry. He was one of the founders of three highly successful and ongoing yearly workshops: the International Workshop on Household Survey Nonresponse (in its 31st year), the International Total Survey Error Workshop (in its 16th year) and the International Comparative Survey Design and Implementation Workshop (in its 19th year). His contributions to the field also include service on more than 50 international advisory committees.

Lars has been one of the giants of survey methods. He was the winner of the 2012 American Statistical Association's Waksberg Award for his lengthy and valuable contribution to survey methodology. He won the 2013 World Association for Public Opinion Research's Helen Dinerman Award as well as the 2018 American Association for Public Opinion Research Lifetime Achievement Award. The citation from the Dinerman Award *provides an excellent summary of his contributions.*

He received the award for his rigorous introduction of the concept of quality in the design, operation, and management of surveys", his "efforts to improve data quality and minimize total survey error during his long-career at Statistics Sweden", his profound influence on the international survey-research community and his work as founding editor of the Journal of Official Statistics (JOS), which "besides being one of the top journals in the field is freely available to readers". The award is also won for being "co-author and co-editor of many of the leading books on survey-research methods over the last 40 years." As formulated in the diploma: "Contributing to any of these volumes would mark Lyberg as a star, collectively they make him a constellation. Additionally, he has made important contributions to many international organizations in the field of statistics and survey research."

Among the contributions listed is providing leadership to the worldwide development of survey methodology. The award is given for "outstanding contributions to survey methodology."

Lars had many interests besides statistics especially sport where he had encyclopaedic knowledge, especially with regard to tennis, football (soccer) and American baseball. Indeed, he was an excellent tennis player in his younger days and refereed international tennis matches. He enjoyed telling stories of arguing with the likes of Bjorn Borg over line calls. A colleague and good friend recently shared some of his fondest memories:

But we were much more than colleagues; we were friends. We took several trips to Spring Training in Florida over the years. The trips lasted for 10 days, and we were on the road four of those days. Of course, I had to introduce him to southern cooking along the way. We spent a lot of time talking about survey methodology, but there was so much more. In the beginning, we would get to two games a day. As we got older, we settled for one. Lars was an Oriole fan, and I was a Yankee fan. We had to see the Orioles and Yankees at least once. It was great when the two teams were playing each other. I know that those trips were among the high points in my life, and I hope that was true for Lars. I know we will all miss him terribly.

Lars' is survived by his wife, Dr Lilli Japac, a fellow statistician at Statistics Sweden, who also became head of Research and Development subsequent to Lars' retirement; his two adult sons, Luis and Carlos, adopted from Bolivia during his first marriage; and hundreds of friends, colleagues and students.

Dennis Trewin, Paul Biemer, Bob Groves, Beth-Ellen Pennell, Clyde Tucker