

Remembering Professor Petr Hebák (9.8.1940–12.6.2022)

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On Sunday afternoon, June 12, we learned the sad news that Professor Petr Hebák has left us forever at the age of 81. He was the Nestor¹ of Czech statistics, but above all else a multifaceted personality, good man, colleague, and friend.



In his person, the statistical community has lost an important expert and a passionate promoter of statistics. He dealt mainly with the problems of regression analysis, multivariate statistical methods, and Bayesian statistics and their use in economic analyses. He was the author or co-author of 8 monographs in the field of statistics. We should mention *Multivariate Statistical Methods with Applications* (SNTL, 1987), which he wrote with his generational contemporaries Jiří Hustopecský, and a trilogy with a similar title, which he published together with other authors in 2004–2007. The monograph *Statistical Thinking and Tools for Data Analysis* (Informatorium, 2013) was the collective work in which he and his colleagues summarized

the results of their research. In addition to books, he has authored dozens, perhaps hundreds, of articles in journals and conference proceedings. Among his popular works, let us recall the articles *Statistical Data and Their Meaning*, *Statistical Data and Their Telling Power*, and *Statistical Data and Their Uses*, which he published in the journal *Statistics* in 2002 and 2003.

Petr Hebák's rich teaching activity was mainly connected with the Department of Statistics at the University of Economics, where he worked since 1962 for more than 50 years (over 100 semesters). When shaping the profile and focus of the department in the early 1990s, he was at its head and actively participated in the establishment of the Faculty of Computer Science and Statistics. Through lectures, seminars, and supervision of theses and Ph.D. students, he was involved in the formation of several generations of future statisticians, including many current academics, staff of the National Statistical Office, researchers, and other professionals. He has written over 30 titles of university and high school textbooks and scripts. In this field, his collection of problems, *Probability Counts in Examples* (with co-author Jana Kahounová), which has been released in seven editions between 1978 and 2014, will probably remain unsurpassed.

However, Petr Hebák was not only a statistician and a great teacher; his range of activities was incredibly wide. Let's try to mention at least some of them. Petr was a long-time player at the national team level, a coach, and an official of the bridge association. In 1993 he published the first Czech modern textbook of this card game, *Bridge for Everyone*, which has also been published repeatedly, most recently in 2010. He also played chess at the master level. It is also worth mentioning his acting in a theatre company, and his interest in boating and cottaging in the Highlands.

Peter will always be remembered as a highly sociable, amusing, and entertaining person. When we meet with friends, we will certainly recall with a smile many stories in which he figured (some

¹ We think the designation is very appropriate in his case. Nestor was a figure of mythical Greece. According to Homer, he was the oldest, most righteous and also the most prudent of all the Achaean leaders fighting at Troy.

of which have long since taken on a life of their own). His extraordinarily developed sense of justice and social sensitivity in combination with his outspokenness caused some difficulties throughout his life

His beloved wife Olga, always kind and patient, gave him great support in all his activities. Given the above list of activities, the reader will understand that it was not always entirely easy. It must be said that Peter was very attached to his large family, his four daughters, their partners, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

While celebrating his 80th birthday, Peter told us that "we have come together to rejoice that we are still alive". It is very hard to accept the fact that this will no longer be the case.