

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION
ROSEDITH SITGREAVES BOWKER
(1915 - 1992)

Rosedith Sitgreaves died of heart failure February 1, 1992 in Mitchellville, Maryland at the age of 77. Thus ended a long career as statistician in government, as a Professor of Education, and as mathematician. She was a devoted colleague, friend and adviser to many students. Her guidance to doctoral students was legendary and not readily emulated by her successors.

Rosedith was born on January 30, 1915 in Easton, Pennsylvania. She attended Wilson College, a women's college in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. After receiving her bachelor's degree in 1935, she went to work for the U.S. Public Health Service in Washington, D.C. It was common in those days for those with a full-time job to go to graduate school in late afternoon or night. Rosedith launched her statistical career in this manner and received a master's degree in statistics from George Washington University in 1940. Following this, she took periods of leave and matriculated at Columbia working towards her doctorate.

In 1947 Rosedith Sitgreaves was part of the first postwar cohort at Columbia University, whose faculty in Statistics was particularly distinguished at that time. This was an exciting period, when the field of statistics was being developed, and many, like Rosedith, became distinguished statisticians. She completed her doctoral degree in mathematical statistics with T. W. Anderson, currently Professor Emeritus at Stanford University. Her dissertation was a *tour de force* and dealt with the problem of classifying an observation in one of several populations. This procedure, generally known as discriminant analysis, was used during World War II to classify air force officers. Rosedith's contribution was to determine the distributional behavior of this classification procedure.

She came to Stanford in 1952 as a Research Associate in the Applied Mathematics and Statistics Laboratory. The Department of Statistics was formed in

1948, and the Applied Mathematics and Statistics Laboratory was established two years later, both under the leadership of her future husband Albert H. Bowker. The Department and the Math-Stat Lab, which attracted many visitors, were the scene of pioneering new work in statistics and the mathematical sciences. In later years Rosedith often spoke fondly of the excitement that pervaded the activities in Sequoia Hall and of the sense of participating in bold new developments.

In 1954, she returned to Columbia, rising through the ranks at Teachers College to Professor of Statistics in 1964. That same year she married Al Bowker, who had left Stanford to become Chancellor of the City University of New York. They remained in New York until 1971, when Bowker returned to California as Chancellor at Berkeley, and Rosedith to a faculty appointment at California State University, Hayward. In 1973 she was appointed to a Professorship in the School of Education at Stanford, where she remained until her retirement in 1981.

Her impact on faculty and students was legendary. She enjoyed consulting and helping colleagues with statistical advice. Many times this involved a novel approach, and she would work out some new procedure. Her role as teacher and adviser was recognized by the students, and she won the Students' Award for Excellence in Teaching. The then Dean of the School of Education said, when presenting the award, "An unusually dedicated colleague, she is extending her superb competence to provide advice on the research program in our Center for Research and Development in Teaching, and to participate in the decision-making curriculum of our new program in administration and policy making in education. I don't know what we would do without her, and I hope that we will not be confronted by the question." Rose stayed on another six years before retiring.

Rose's research was mainly in multivariate analysis and test design. She liked applications and became involved in a wide range of problems. She participated in a study in tracking SAT and college entrance test scores; she disagreed with Arthur Jensen on genetic factors in education. From an early date she was interested in the education of women, and was actively engaged on panels and committees to help further their careers.

The years at Stanford were joyous ones for Rose. She enjoyed the intellectual stimulation and excellence of students. She also enjoyed her role as hostess, both as the wife of the Chancellor at the University of California, Berkeley and also as a

member of the Stanford faculty. Students were welcome guests at her house. This merger of roles came easily, and she introduced herself simultaneously as Professor Sitgreaves and Mrs. Bowker.

Rosedith was recognized by the profession and received numerous honors. She was a Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund 1946-47, a Guggenheim Fellow 1963-64. She was a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics.

Rosedith was a close friend to many – to students, to colleagues at Berkeley, Stanford, Washington and New York, to the many whom she helped and stimulated. She was a kind and gentle woman, and will be missed by all who knew her.

Ingram Olkin, chair
Lee J. Cronbach
Gerald J. Lieberman
Halsey Royden