

Léopold MARTIN
1909-1991⁽¹⁾

Pierre Dagnelie

Faculté des Sciences agronomiques
B-5030 Gembloux (Belgique)



Léopold Martin listening to Professor P. Spehl, first President of the Société Adolphe Quetelet

Léopold Martin, former president of the Biometric Society and the *Société Adolphe Quetelet* (Belgian Region of the Biometric Society), died in Brussels on 26 April 1991, on the eve of his 82nd birthday.

Léopold Martin was born in Brussels on 4 May 1909. He received most of his higher education at Brussels University and had the rare privilege of receiving a PhD in physics and mathematics in 1934, and graduating as an MD in 1943.

At the end of World War II, Léopold Martin became very much interested in biometry, and in 1949, he became lecturer, and later full professor of biometry at the *Faculté des Sciences agronomiques* in Gembloux and at Brussels University.

In 1951, Léopold Martin was asked by the *Institut pour l'Encouragement de la Recherche scientifique dans l'Industrie et l'Agriculture* (IRSIA) to set up a service unit which, in 1953, became the *Bureau de Biométrie*, which he headed until 1964. He also worked closely with the *Institut national pour l'Etude agronomique du Congo* (INEAC), in Belgian Congo (Zaire), Rwanda and Burundi.

While creating the *Bureau de Biométrie*, Léopold Martin took his first business trip, in 1952, to the U.S. and, among others, visited the University of North Carolina. This trip initiated international relations, particularly with the Biometric Society, founded in 1947. Léopold Martin was a member of the council of the Biometric Society on several occasions from 1953 to 1974 (1953-1955, 1956-1958, 1963-1965, 1969-1971, and 1972-1974). He became president of the Society in 1960-1961 and vice-president in 1962.

(1) *Biometric Bulletin* 8 (3), 29, 1991.

In 1952, Léopold Martin also founded the *Société Adolphe Quetelet*, the Belgian Region of the Biometric Society. He acted as secretary until 1962, then as vice-president and president from 1963 to 1970. During that period, he organized several one-day meetings and invited speakers such as Chester I. Bliss, Gertrude M. Cox, David J. Finney, Prasanta C. Mahalanobis, Jerzy S. Neyman, Frank Yates, William J. Youden, and many other famous biometricians and statisticians. During that same period, he started the journal *Biométrie-Praximétrie*, which first appeared in 1960 and for which he acted as editor until 1963. He was later elected honorary member of the *Société Adolphe Quetelet*.

This list of Léopold Martin's national and international activities is far from exhaustive: we could for instance add that he served on the Editorial Board of *Biometrics* and was elected to the International Statistical Institute in 1958.

Pioneer of the development of biometry after World War II, Léopold Martin was also a very friendly man. Everybody had much pleasure to meet him.

All the members of the *Société Adolphe Quetelet* and the Biometric Society are deeply grateful to Léopold Martin for his outstanding contribution to the expansion of biometry in Belgium.