

Editorial

The founder of the Theory of Sampling (TOS) passed on 5 November 2015. The sampling community was shocked to the core and has been grieving since. We are only now beginning to get to grips with the fact that **Pierre Gy** is no longer with us. However, a passing is not only grief and sorrow—after a time it is also the beginning ... the beginning of a celebration of a life extraordinarily well lived, of a man in full as regards both family and his professional scientific achievements which are *sine qua non*. It is a clear obligation to our community to dedicate a full issue of *TOS forum* to his fantastic life and extraordinary achievements. In this issue is contained a wealth of evidence to his interactions with a broad spectrum of colleagues and friends, in particular in the form of personal tributes from five Pierre Gy Sampling Gold Medal awardees. We are also deeply grateful to Elsevier BV for kind permission to reprint Pierre's last five papers, originally appearing as part of the WCSB1 proceedings (2004). This is but a small selection from a scientific *oeuvre* that contains more than 250 entries. But we are confident it is a fitting excerpt because this is where Pierre Gy found occasion to write his personal history and overview of the background, gestation, development and 25 years of application of what came to be known as the Theory of Sampling. Pierre here presents a new overview of the structure of TOS based on his very long professional career and the many reactions he received during five decades. He was very happy with this opportunity to review and complete his TOS in this context. The reprints clearly show the spirit of the first-ever world conference in sampling, which was dedicated to his honour in its entirety. Please take a moment and peruse his complete bibliography, which tells its own succinct story of the period 1950–2003.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the activities of the sampling community are markedly divided: *before* and *after* WCSB1, and many of the tributes comment on this and describe the accelerated scientific and individual interactions that resulted. However, Pierre Gy himself was sadly never able

to attend any of the subsequent WCSB conferences. Never-the-less, contact was not lost; how this played out is also outlined in the tributes. This issue has been put together to illustrate as many as possible important episodes in Pierre's professional life from 2003 to 2015, for the benefit of all young(er) members of our community. The Editor thanks Phillippe Wavrer for writing a relevant paper on Pierre Gy's famous linear proportional sampler.

The last meeting with Pierre is naturally in focus, as a group of close friends and colleagues visited him at the caretaker home in Bordeaux where he spent his last years. This occasion is made all the more important because it took place at the last day of WCSB7 conference which was held on 10–12 June 2015. This meeting is well covered in this issue for obvious reasons. As it turned out one of our community, Ana Carolina Chieragati, who was unable to partake in this visit, undertook on her own volition to visit him on her way to the airport the day after. Thus history decided that Ana Carolina would be the very last of our community to meet with Pierre. Her tribute is included in this issue for this very reason. Although very brief it is without doubt the most poignant farewell on behalf of all of us who respected and loved Pierre. Ana Carolina's photos from this visit happened to capture Pierre in extraordinarily good mood and spirit, which grace this issue. The Editor is also very grateful to the Gy family for permission to include a selection of family photos.

Pierre Gy has now passed on the baton to the entire sampling community—we accept this solemnly and will work tirelessly to honour his legacy.

Kim H. Esbensen



Special Issue
honouring
Pierre Gy and his
lifetime's work



Be part of the next issue of *TOS forum*!

We welcome contributions to *TOS forum*: articles, letters, comment, news or news of PhD projects for the PhD Presentations column.

TOS forum Editor, Kim Esbensen, would be pleased to discuss any ideas you may have and to receive your contributions.

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TOS forum is the communication forum for the theory and practice of representative sampling (TOS). Visit www.impublishations.com/tos-forum for details.

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