



In Memoriam: Neville E. O'Reilly

Dr. Neville E. O'Reilly, a beloved husband, educator, and mentor, passed away on September 22, 2021, in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Neville was born in Durban, South Africa where he obtained his undergraduate degree first in legal studies and then a second undergraduate degree in applied mathematics in which he excelled. Upon graduation, he became a practicing attorney and engaged in defending a prominent anti-apartheid activist, which did not make Neville popular with the existing government. Following this case, Neville's parents encouraged him to leave South Africa to pursue his passion for mathematics and statistics. He won a full scholarship from Columbia University where he obtained his PhD in Mathematical Statistics and Probability under the supervision of the prominent statistician Herbert Ellis Robbins. Upon completing his degree, Neville joined the faculty of the Department of Statistics at Rutgers before moving to the business world where he held senior positions at AT&T, Netspeak, Dialect Solutions and Equitrac in finance, strategic planning, business operations as well as in product development, management, and marketing.

After a long career in business working on several continents, Neville came back to Rutgers in 2012 to become the Associate Director of the newly launched MS degree program in Financial Statistics and Risk Management (FSRM), one of two professional programs that he would help build in the Department of Statistics. The FSRM program was a unique offering at the time and Neville played a vital role in its development and success. He again played a vital role in 2016 when the MS degree program in Data Science was launched, for which he also served as Associate Director.

Neville was an inspiring and beloved educator and mentor. He enjoyed teaching and was an avid mentor and career adviser to his students given his vast industry experience. Going above and beyond to help students was one of his trademarks. One of Neville's greatest pleasures was seeing his students succeed.

Neville has always been known to family and friends as a person of boundless energy and master of all things intellectual and practical. In fact, his friends affectionally nicknamed him "Mr. Incredible". Neville was the person friends would call upon when they needed help with home repairs or technology, or simply wanted to engage in "grand conversations" about wide ranging topics from national and international politics, economics, science, statistics, and literature. While working or reading, he enjoyed listening to music, particularly jazz, blues, country and folk, which was a constant backdrop to his thinking. Neville was also a keen tennis player throughout his life, enjoying the competition and camaraderie. One of his doubles friends recently commented that Neville was the only person he knew who apologized to his partner when he missed a shot. In recent years, photography became his new passion and he intently studied how to capture his subjects in spectacular detail. Throughout his life Neville slept only 4 to 5 hours each night, preferring to work or read. Students and colleagues often remarked about getting an email from Neville at 3:00 a.m. while everyone else was sleeping. Neville will always be remembered as a man of many talents, insatiable curiosity, with a generous heart and loving nature. He will be deeply missed by us all.

Neville's brother George, sister Susan, niece Kerry, nephew Graeme and their families still reside in South Africa. They join his loving wife Peggy and the Department of Statistics at Rutgers University in mourning Neville's passing and celebrating his life and legacy.

The Department of Statistics at Rutgers University will establish the Neville E. O'Reilly Award in honor of Neville's memory. His family would greatly appreciate a note recalling a personal memory of Neville to be sent to pegoreilly486@gmail.com. Those wishing to make a memorial donation can contribute to funding the Award in lieu of flowers.

Written respectively by Mrs. Peggy O'Reilly and the colleagues of Neville's at the Rutgers Statistics Department

For more information on donations for the Neville E. O'Reilly Award Fund, please contact Mr. Mohannad Aama at Rutgers Statistics Department at <mohannad.aama@rutgers.edu>.