

In Memoriam - Stig Larsson

Dalhousie University Announcements <DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>

on behalf of

Public Relations Formal Email Notice <notice@dal.ca>

Thu 6/14/2012 11:59 AM

To: DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA <DAL-ANNOUNCEMENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>

In Memory of Stig

I have been asked to write a memorial to my friend, Stig Larsson, who died on Monday, June 11, 2012. This is surely a difficult task. Stig was like a brother to me and I have cried often the past few days. So my words are very personal.

I met Stig in 1977, when he joined the faculty of the School of Business Administration. We hit it off immediately and it was like we were friends before meeting. I guess we were together a lot, since the staff referred to us as Lenny and Stiggy (a take on the two characters from the TV show Laverne and Shirley: Lenny and Squiggy). Over the next 30 years Stig and I shared many common interests. We both loved the women in our lives, teaching, Zimbabwe, a cool beer, and an elegant proof of a theorem (in that order). I depended on Stig for advice on school matters and a compassionate ear when things didn't go as I hoped.

Everyone remembers Stig for his teaching. Winning a teaching award for Stig was like Wayne Gretsky winning a scoring title. He loved students and they loved him. When I was Director of the School, I often went to alumni events to keep in touch with our grads. In talks with former students, they would ask about faculty. The two who were most remembered were Stig and Raj Sandhu (another wonderful man). The charm Stig had with colleagues was clearly in evidence with his students.

Stig had a curious mind and his ideas were substantial. I am currently working on a book with Bill Ziemba. One chapter is on utility theory and there is some significant criticism of the Expected Utility Hypothesis by the famous D. Kahneman and A. Tversky, the proponents of Prospect Theory. In reading the work of K & T, I was surprised to find a reference to a paper by Stig, which preceded prospect theory. I recently told Stig about this citation and he was pleased.

The essence of Stig was his personality. It always raised my spirits to see him. His great sense of humor was grounded in the numerous screw-ups we see every day, a reflection on the human condition. He provided a few moments himself. Many years ago my wife asked that I wallpaper the hall in our house. Stig and our friend Pat King decided to help, knowing the chances of my failure. They arrived at the house before I returned from work and started on the walls. When I got home, Stig and Pat were sitting on the floor in the hall having a beer and many panels of paper were up. Unfortunately, the pattern on the paper was flowers and they had the paper on upside down – wilted flowers I guess. This was a source of lots of laughter and we simply fixed the problem.

Stig had numerous health problems in the past decade. He had to stop teaching and that hurt. In 2009 his loving wife, Ann, died unexpectedly and that certainly changed everything. We still met often and worked on some problems in aviation safety. Each week he came by the house on Monday and Friday morning to pick me up and we would go to Tim Horton's for coffee, usually joined by Pat King and John Misick. He picked me up this past Monday and after coffee dropped me off at my house around 11:00 am. I said I would see him on Friday. Well I won't see Stig this Friday, but I'll be at the window thinking of him. Bye, Stig.

Lenny

(Professor Leonard MacLean, Dalhousie University School of Business)

Prof. Stig Larsson passed away on Monday, June 11th in a car accident on Hwy. 329. Stig was with

the School of Business from 1977 until he retired in 2005. Over the years, he taught statistics to undergraduate and graduate students. He also taught operations research to graduate students. Stig served as Academic Coordinator for the Bachelor of Commerce program for a period of time.

Stig was born in Motala, Sweden (1943). He took his undergraduate degree in mathematics (Honours in Statistics) at Sir George Williams University, a MSc (Statistics) at the University of Alberta and his PhD (Management Science) at the University of British Columbia. He was predeceased by his wife Anne (Sutherland) Larsson, and leaves children Cathy Larsson, Michael (Tracy) Larsson and James Larsson, and grandchildren Adam and Nissa.

The funeral will take place at St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Chester, Lunenburg Co., Saturday June 16 at 10 a.m., burial in the church cemetery will occur at a later date.