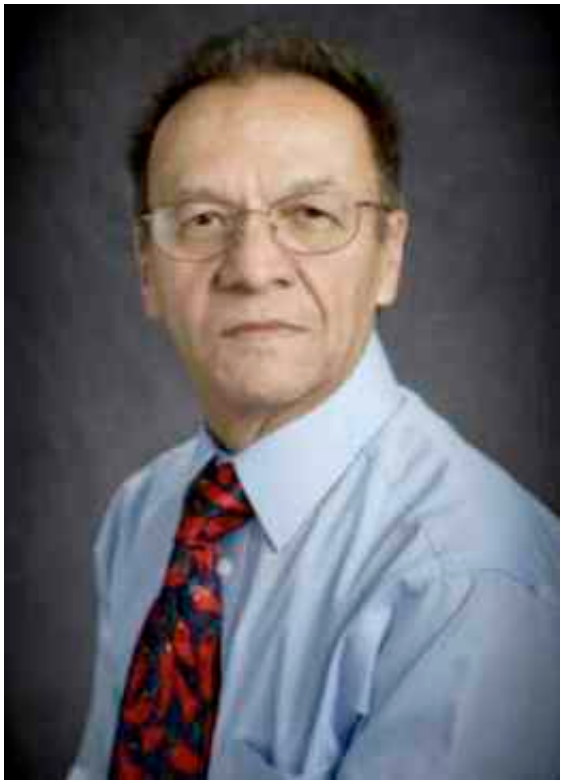
William G. Hunter Award 2013: Luis Escobar



The recipient of the 2013 William G. Hunter Award is Luis Escobar. The Statistics Division of the American Society for Quality (ASQ) established the Hunter Award in 1987 in memory of the Division's founding chair to promote, encourage and acknowledge outstanding accomplishments during a career in the broad field of applied statistics. The attributes that characterize Bill Hunter's career - consultant, educator for practitioners, communicator, and integrator of statistical thinking into other disciplines - are used to help decide the recipient.

Acceptance speech by Luis Escobar:

I am grateful to have been chosen to receive this yearâ€™s Hunter Award. Thank you to the Hunter Award Committee for their work and to all the individuals that put forward and supported my nomination.

I did not meet Bill Hunter personally. When I went in 1987 to the Madison campus to take a Robust Design course at the Center for Quality and Productivity, he had

Hunter Awardees

1988 William Hill
1989 Rudolf Kittlitz
1990 Ronald Snee
1991 Gerald Hahn
1992 Brian Joiner
1993 John MacGregor
1994 J. Edward Jackson
1995 William Lawton
1996 Douglas Montgomery
1997 Lynne Hare
1998 Edward Sylvestre
1999 Roger Hoerl
2000 David Bacon
2001 Karen Kafadar (pdf file)
2002 Sren Bisgaard
2003 Bill Meeker (pdf file)
2004 Tony Greenfield
2005 Douglas Hawkins

already died. I, however, was influenced by his work during my PhD studies. During my second year at Iowa State University, we used his Statistical for Experimenters book. Since I was an engineer by training and my statistical knowledge was precarious, I felt at ease in that class. The emphasis on statistical thinking, applications, the interplay of theory and applications, experimental design, and decisions based on data analysis, made that book useful, motivating, formative, and a source of inspiration.

After reading some of Bill Hunter's work and the recollection of others that knew him and his work, one can only ask: How did he manage to do so much, in a large variety of application areas, so well, for so long? I concur with others that a simple plausible answer is: Bill Hunter was a remarkable individual, strongly committed to his work, to society, and to the world. He was determined to make things better and he did. He had a positive impact on us, he made our profession better and more relevant, and his legacy has inspired us to be better. Bill Hunterâ€™s contributions to statistics and his approach to the practice of our profession should be mandatory reading for students in statistics.

My contributions to statistics are not of the quality, the breadth, or the impact of Bill Hunterâ€™s work. I am, however, happy to see that activities that I have pursued with great interest and passion were also part of the much broader approach practiced and promoted by Bill Hunter. I recognize the importance of editorial work, but I was exhausted after about 15 years as Associated Editor of Technometrics. He, however, played a broader active role in Technometrics for 21 years on top of many other activities.

I share Bill Hunterâ€™s interest on the importance of exercising leadership in the training of statisticians from developing countries with the purpose of using statistics to improve the quality of life in those countries. I was grateful to find the strong support to my nomination from CIMAT in Mexico and National University in Medellin Colombia for my mentoring, help, and statistics contributions to their institutions and countries in general. Finally, similarly to Bill Hunter, I am mostly motivated by working on the solution of practical problems that could benefit from some statistical insight.

2006 Bovas Abraham
2007 T.N. Goh
2008 Ronald J.M.M. Does
2009 Necip Doganaksoy
2010 Tom Nolan
2011 Geoff Vining
2012 Christine Anderson-Cook
2013 Luis Escobar

I have always considered myself an extremely lucky person. Today, I feel honored and lucky that the ASQ Statistical Division has recognized my work with such a prestigious award.

Thank you, have a great conference.

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