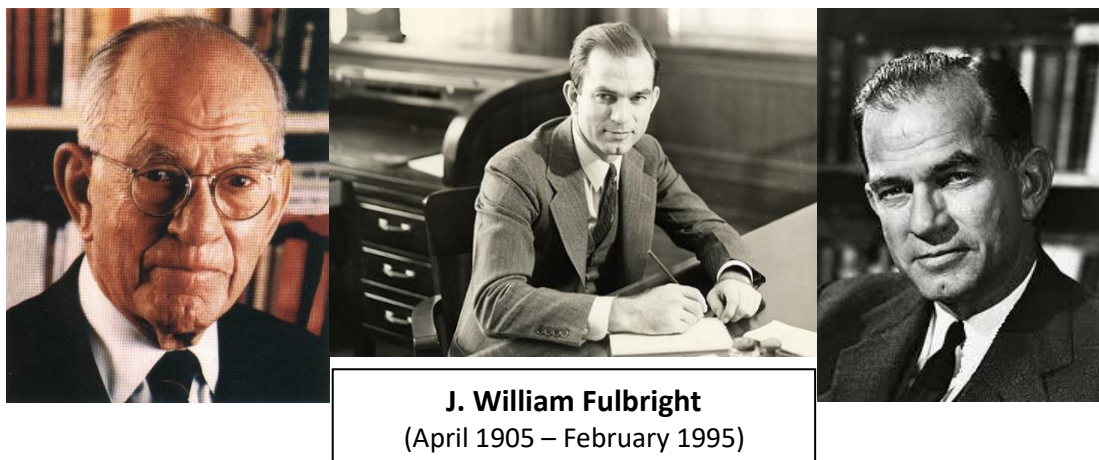




MY EXPERIENCE AS A FULBRIGHTER
AN APPRAISAL OF THE FULBRIGHT PROGRAM



CARLOS A. COELHO
MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT
AND CENTER FOR MATHEMATICS AND ITS APPLICATIONS
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS E TECNOLOGIA
UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA



1. Introduction

The Fulbright Program is an international exchange program from the U.S.A. State Department administered by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The program was founded in 1946 by the United States Senator J. William Fulbright and in Fulbright's own words:

"The Fulbright Program aims to bring a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs and thereby to increase the chance that nations will learn to live in peace and friendship."

¹ **BIO-NOTE:** Carlos A. Coelho is a Full Professor of Statistics at the Mathematics Department of Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia of Universidade Nova de Lisboa. He holds a Ph.D. in Biostatistics by The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, U.S.A., and his main areas of research are Mathematical Statistics and Distribution Theory, namely the derivation of Likelihood Ratio Tests for elaborate structures of covariance matrices and for MANOVA-like models under the assumption of elaborate covariance structures, as well as the study and development of exact and near-exact distributions for these and other likelihood ratio test statistics used in Multivariate Analysis. Other areas of interest are Estimation, Univariate and Multivariate Linear, Generalized Linear and Mixed Models, as well as Computational Statistics. In a 2004 paper published in the *Journal of Multivariate Analysis*, he laid the foundations for what he called 'near-exact distributions'. Since then these have been successfully applied to a large number of statistics, with more than 40 papers published on this topic. Carlos A. Coelho is an Elected Member of the International Statistical Institute and serves as Associate Editor in the Editorial Boards of *Journal of Applied Statistics*, *REVSTAT*, *Journal of Statistical Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Interdisciplinary Mathematics*, *American Journal of Mathematical and Management Sciences* and *Discussiones Mathematicae-Probability and Statistics*. Carlos A. Coelho, a Fulbrighter, is also Vice-President of the Board of Directors of Fulbrighters Portugal – the Portuguese Fulbright Alumni Association. His personal web-page may be found at: <https://www.sites.google.com/site/carloscoelho111/>.



What a great and honorable objective! Surely, it is men of this stature and vision that humankind needs!

On May 5th, 1993, J. William Fulbright was awarded the more than deserved Presidential Medal of Freedom, and about him, another William, this one better known as Bill Clinton (XLII President of the United States, 1993-2001) said on June 5th 1996 at the Fulbright Scholarship Program 50th Anniversary Dinner (State Dining Room at the White House) that he was there "... to honor the dream and legacy of a great American, a citizen of the world, a native of my home state and my mentor and friend".

The Fulbright Program is:

"One of the most [if not the most] widely recognized and prestigious international exchange programs in the world that grants support for graduate study and research in [more than] 140 countries. The program actively seeks out individuals of achievement and potential who represent the full diversity of their respective societies and selects nominees through open, merit-based competitions" (cited from "Get Noticed Through Prestigious Scholarships", *U.S. News & World Report*, November 25, 2011, with the text inside square brackets inserted by the author).

As such, being a Fulbrighter is, for many reasons, a big honor, besides being an extremely rewarding experience. And I believe this is one of the reasons why any Fulbrighter says: "Fulbrighter once, Fulbrighter forever"!

2- My Experience

For giving me the chance to be a Fulbrighter I am indebted to the Fulbright Commission in Portugal, to JNICT (Junta Nacional de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica) through the INVOTAN Program (NATO Research Program), to FLAD (The Luso-American Development Foundation) and also, of



course, to the Fulbright Program itself, and, beyond any doubt, to J. William Fulbright for his outstanding idea.

To the Fulbright Commission and the Fulbright Program I still have to thank the choice of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor as the host institution for my Ph.D.. And what a great University and a great institution it is!

My first contact was José Miranda Guedes, now a Full Professor at the Mechanical Engineering Department at Instituto Superior Técnico and who was then also a Fulbrighter and a Ph.D. student at the University of Michigan, who gave me a ride from the Detroit airport to Ann Arbor, for my arrival in town.

Living in Ann Arbor and attending the University of Michigan gave me the chance to meet extraordinary people, both at the University as well as all the friends I was able to 'gather' outside the University. I arrived at Ann Arbor in July 1988 and left in April 1992.



Autumn colors in Ann Arbor

(in counterclockwise direction)

1- Central Campus, near the base of Burton Memorial Tower; 2- Central Campus; 3- downtown Ann Arbor

(photos by the author)



I miss the place itself. Ann Arbor is an extraordinarily beautiful city, with its rigorous Winters, blossoming Springs, hot Summers and stunning colored Autumns and all that life that flows around the University of Michigan.

But I also miss, it may be even more, the friends I left behind. By then e-mail was just starting to get around, it was not yet widely used and only some institutions, as it was the case of most Universities, and people associated with these institutions had access to it.

And, since I am not too good at writing common mail letters, I lost contact with all those friends I left behind. Much unhappily some of them are most likely no more with us, as it most surely is the case of a black couple I met, whose husband was by then 97 years old. He was a veteran from the II World War, with extremely interesting experiences, who lately embraced an absolutely peace-oriented religion, which they both really nurtured and followed.

Knowing them, as well as knowing a number of other people, was a much enriching and rewarding experience, which helped much in mitigating the temporary loss of contact with the friends and family I had left behind in my home country.

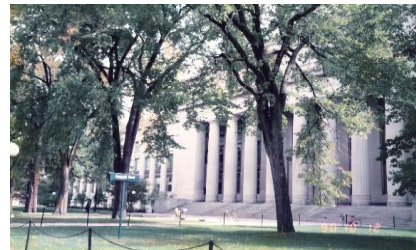
When I got in Ann Arbor, by the end of July 1988, it was an unusually hot Summer and I remember that everybody was getting worried about the beautiful lawns that were getting dry.

Very much happily quite soon we started having some light late afternoon Summer storms which brought some rain, bringing the drought to an end. I liked so much Ann Arbor and all that was related with this town that I even learned how to like and enjoy those storms.

Then there started three and half years of intense work, but very much happily I always kept being able to get together with most of the many friends I was able to make.



The University of Michigan has a magnificent campus, or, should I rather say, a magnificent set of campuses. Its North Campus is located in a very nice large wooded area, situated north of the city, while its Central Campus is placed right downtown Ann Arbor, with its landmarks, as the Burton Memorial Tower, which houses a carillon with 53 bells, weighing a total of 43 tons, which make of it the world's fourth-heaviest. It also houses: classrooms for the School of Music and offices the Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology); the Rackham building, which houses the Horace H. Rackham Graduate School; the Angel Hall, which houses the College of Literature, Science and the Arts, of which the Statistics Department is part of, the University hospital and, of course, the School of Public Health, from which the Department of Biostatistics is part of.



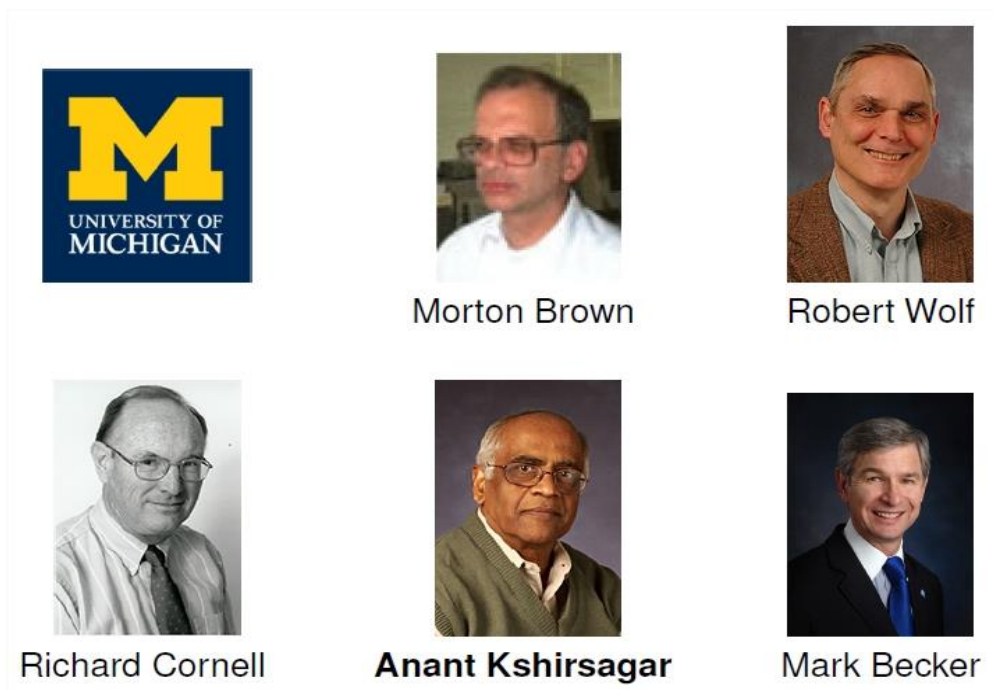
University of Michigan – Central Campus
(from top to bottom and left to right) 1- Burton Memorial Tower; 2- The Horace H. Rackham building; 3- Angel Hall; 4- The School of Public Health

(photos 1, 2 and 3 by the author; photo 4 from <https://www.publichealth.com.ng>)



I started my Ph.D. program at the Statistics Department and then moved to the Biostatistics Department. As a student at both Departments I had the chance to meet extraordinary Professors, but, of course, being the Department of Biostatistics the one where I spent most of the time and where I got my Ph.D., it were the Professors at the Biostatistics Department, the ones who marked me most.

Some of these Professors are pictured in the next picture. I sat in classes from all of them, except Professor Richard Cornell, who was Head of the Department of Biostatistics during most of the time I was a student there. Professor Anant Kshirsagar was my Ph.D. advisor and Professor Mark Becker is now the President at Georgia State University



Some of the **Professors at the Biostatistics Department of the University of Michigan** who marked me most
(pictures taken from the Department web-site)



I am not able to think about the time I spent at the Biostatistics Department without remembering my dear colleague Thomas Ten Have. Tom, as we all called him, was one year ahead of me and his advisor was Mark Becker. Very much unhappily Tom is not with us anymore, since 2012, but he will live forever in the hearts of whoever got to know him since we will never forget the great colleague and the great human being he was, and to show that this is by far not only my own opinion, I took the liberty to reproduce here the obituary published by the Center for Health Statistics from the University of Chicago.



Tom Ten Have

In Memory of Thomas R. Ten Have

Dear Friends,

It is with great sadness that I report on the death of our friend and colleague, Tom Ten Have. Tom was a devoted husband, father, professor, statistical scientist, and a beloved colleague. Tom was 50 years old. In his distinguished career he published over 200 wonderful peer reviewed papers that established new trajectories for statistical research and scientific thinking. Tom was a fellow of the American Statistical Association and a recipient of the Harvard Award for Lifetime Contributions to Psychiatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Note published in memory of Thomas R. Ten Have by the Center for Health Statistics of the University of Chicago

On a happier note, I would say that we cannot say anything about Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan without referring to the great football games played at the UofM Stadium. If you have never attended an American *Gaudium Sciendi*, N° 20, Junho 2020

Football game, then you must start with Ann Arbor and the Wolverines (the nickname by which the football team is known – wolverines are powerful animals that integrate the Michigan fauna and resemble a small bear but are actually the largest members of the weasel family).



Two views of two different games at the University of Michigan Stadium – see how the Stadium is completely full! We can almost hear the outcry “Go Blue”!

The Stadium itself is like a monument in Ann Arbor, and the ambience in those games is something special! You just have to get there and hear, feel and shout the outcry "Go Blue!". If you have never experienced it, you have no idea what you miss!

3- As a Conclusion

As a conclusion, I can only say that whatever I do or whatever I write I will never do or say enough to thank the people who worked towards and allowed me to have such a rewarding experience, allowing me

- to meet extraordinary people
- to enjoy fabulous Autumn colors
- to have extraordinary Professors
- to enjoy an extraordinary formation, which allows me to work in an area I really like and to have a profession I really nurture
- to watch those football games (Go Blue!)



I surely miss all these as I also miss all the fabulous people I met, who will live forever in my heart. Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the University of Michigan, Go Blue! Forever!

And you that are reading these lines, if you have never been a Fulbrighter, you don't know what you missed, just run, since you are still on time to become one, and be one forever!

ABSTRACT

This writing is a simple text where the author states his feelings and appreciation for the Fulbright Program and his experience as a Fulbrighter.

Keywords:

Ann Arbor, J. William Fulbright, University of Michigan

RESUMO

Trata-se de um texto simples onde o autor expressa os seus sentimentos de apreço pelo Programa Fulbright e relata alguns aspectos da sua experiência como Fulbrighter.

Palavras-chave:

Ann Arbor, J. William Fulbright, University of Michigan