

Holly C. Fryer

Holly Clare Fryer was born December 6, 1908 in Carlton, Oregon, the younger of two children of Daisy and Lewis Fryer. He grew up in Yamhill, Oregon and graduated from Yamhill High School in 1926. He began college at Oregon State (then Oregon State College) but finished his B.S. degree in Mathematics at the University of Oregon in 1931. He subsequently obtained his M.S. degree in Mathematics at Oregon State.

It was while teaching and pursuing an advanced degree at the University of Illinois that he discovered his love of modern statistics. He then enrolled in the new program in statistics at Iowa State University in Ames. There he studied under the noted applied statistician, George Snedecor, and earned the first doctorate in statistics awarded by Iowa State University in July of 1940.

Dr. Fryer joined the faculty in the Department of Mathematics at Kansas State in the summer of 1940 as the sole statistician. In addition to his teaching and research he did large amounts of consulting with researchers across the campus and effectively promoted statistics as an integral part of any research university. Through his efforts, the Statistical Laboratory was established by the Kansas Board of Regents on July 1, 1946, with Dr. Fryer as its first director. Continuing his efforts, he pushed for a separate academic department of statistics. This, too, came to fruition when the Department of Statistics was established on July 1, 1959, with Dr. Fryer being named the first head of the department.

In 1966, Dr. Fryer was doubly honored by major statistical societies, by being named a Fellow of the American Statistical Association and almost simultaneously being named a Fellow of the Royal (British) Statistical Society.

On January 1, 1975, Dr. Fryer stepped down as head of the Department of Statistics. He retired from the active KSU faculty in 1979 after 39 years of loyal service. Holly Fryer died on November 7, 2004.

Dr. Fryer and his wife have endowed the Holly and Beth Fryer Scholarship in Statistics, which has annually been the department's premier student honor. Their support of the department has been longstanding and generous.