

In memoriam Hilary L. Seal

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In memoriam

Hilary L. Seal

On July 25, 1984, Hilary L. Seal, actuary, statistician and corresponding member of our Association, died at the age of 73.

Hilary Seal was born on January, 11, 1911, at Solihull (Warwickshire, England) and was educated at Birmingham and in London. His doctoral thesis already announced the thrust of his subsequent activity: stochastic processes and mortality. He was captivated by statistics. But the demands of the hour called him toward other horizons: As the war raged in 1940, he entered the statistical service of the Admiralty, which he was later to lead. In 1948 Hilary Seal completed a training stint at a Canadian insurance company and then settled in the United States, where he worked as an independent consulting actuary for more than 20 years. Together with this professional activity, Hilary Seal taught at Yale and at other universities in the New World; his favorite teaching field was statistics and its implications in biology. His interest in biology and in actuarial science led him to build up a library of high quality which, in his later years in Switzerland, he proudly showed to his visitors. Two walls of his office were covered with the determinative texts and the most important periodicals in these two fields.

Hilary Seal published some 60 scientific articles and 3 actuarial textbooks. His preferred topics were mortality, pension plans, statistical tests and collective risk theory. The leading journals published his articles; associations and firms of all kinds invited him to conduct courses and to lecture. He belonged to more than 20 associations of actuaries and statisticians.

At age 60 Hilary Seal decided to return to Europe. He established residence at Apples in the Canton of Vaud, where he found the right setting for what one can only call an active retirement, together with his wife

and young children. His contacts with the Federal Institute of Technology and the University of Lausanne, his new publications and the collaboration offered generously to various European actuarial societies made him known everywhere in the Old World. He extolled mixed Poisson processes, but also returned, in teamwork with young actuaries, to the pension scheme questions to which he had devoted a large part of his life.

Hilary Seal departed from us in full action. The Association of Swiss Actuaries wishes to pay tribute to him here vis-à-vis his family and his friends throughout the world.

Marc-Henri Amsler