

## **Memorial to Allan McCutcheon at the 2016 MAPOR Conference**

**By Paul J. Lavrakas**

It is with considerable sadness that I recall the last time I was with Allan McCutcheon. The sadness being due to the fact that unbeknownst to me it would be the last time.

It was in May 2015 at the University of Nebraska Lincoln when my Australian colleague, Darren Pennay, and I met with Allan and some of his colleagues for dinner at Lincoln's finest restaurant. Earlier in the day Darren and I had spent several hours with Allan to learn of his experiences with, and to gain his sage advice about, establishing and leading the graduate program in survey research at UNL and directing UNL's Gallup Research Center. One of the major reasons that Darren had travelled from Melbourne Australia to Lincoln was to be able to meet with Allan for the benefit of the university center and graduate program that Darren was helping to establish at Australian National University.

That day with Allan in May 2015 encapsulated many of the reasons that Allan was so respected and revered. Allan had world-renowned knowledge of survey statistics and survey methods, having contributed myriad scholarly works on these topics. He loved his students and gave so much to them as their mentor; and he in turn was beloved by them. Allan was very savvy in the business of establishing and protecting the interests of the university programs that he headed, and knew well the challenges of negotiating the rough and often ugly waters of university politics. And Allan was a "man of the world" with a presence in many international scholarly ventures.

Allan had a quiet sophistication about him. He was humble in ways that often masked his erudite knowledge of many subject areas, including many that had nothing to do with empirical research. This included an appreciation for the so-called "finer things in life," and in saying this I recall how pleased the chef-owner of the gourmet restaurant was that evening to see Allan again.

Allan L. McCutcheon received his undergraduate education from Iowa State U., and earned his master's degree and PhD at the U. of Chicago. His three degrees were in Sociology and his thesis and dissertation were not on statistical topics. For nearly a decade after finishing his doctorate Allan worked in Chicago, mostly at the University of Chicago. He then accepted a faculty position at the U. of Delaware in Sociology where he stayed until 1996. In 1996 he accepted the very prestigious Donald O. Clifton Chair of Survey Science at the U. of Nebraska Lincoln. And he became the founding chair of the university's graduate programs in Survey Research and Methods. Throughout his career, Allan, taught and did research outside the U.S. on many occasions, including in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Allan was honored by being elected as a Fellow by several professional societies, including the Royal Statistical Society, the American Statistical Association, and our own Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research. Allan was also elected to serve in several executive capacities for AAPOR, WAPOR, and MAPOR. He was MAPOR's President in 2003-2004, and it was Allan's idea that MAPOR establish a Student Award for excellence in methodological and statistical research. All of these professional organizations were strengthened by Allan's volunteer service to them.

In closing I want to note for our younger attendees that Allan was a model professional and model human being who found a way to balance a great many things in life. And he was able to do this so that the quality of how he lived was uniformly excellent across all that he did. For those of us who are older, let us take heed that life is often much shorter that it should be and that Allan made a point to enjoy his life as he was living it. But I also must note that Allan so very much deserved to have many more years ahead of him -- for his own enjoyment... that of his family... and for ours in continuing to have Allan enrich our lives.