Ian Maclean (1930 -2018)

Ian Maclean passed away on July 2, 2018. He was 87 years old. I learned this sad news with a lot of emotion since Ian was undoubtedly one of the pillars of the IAOS. He has been one of its members since practically its creation. I think he participated in all the fifteen IAOS biennial Conferences. The first time I met him was during the first Conference held in Roma in 1988 and the last time was during the fifteenth Conference held in Abu Dhabi two years ago. He also participated in several ISI World Statistical Congresses and was elected ISI member in 2013 when he was 82.

Many will remember Ian Maclean for his participation in ISI or IAOS congress social events, during which he wore the traditional “kilt” of the Scottish clan to which he belonged. But for me Ian’s presence among the IAOS members was especially important because he was the perfect example of one of the objectives the founders of this association (I was part of) were looking for. Before the creation of the IAOS, there were other ISI associations dealing more or less with official statistics; but these other associations were grouping statisticians interested by the development of methods in their domain. The objective of the IAOS was different: several people, including Ian and myself insisted on giving to the IAOS the name of International Association for Official Statistics and not International Association of Official Statisticians. That means that we hoped that this new ISI section would be open not only to official statisticians but also to the users of official statistics and more generally to all those who are interested by the role of statistics in the society. Ian’s role in the UK was precisely to bridge the gap between producers and users of official statistics and help them making the best use of them.

In 1988, when Ian participated to the Rome IAOS Conference, he had created two years earlier a small UK business named ‘Business and Trade Statistics Inc’. Around his business, he founded a community to promote dialogue, share information and maintain close liaison between the producers and users of official business and trade statistics. This Forum, now supported by the Office for National Statistics, aims to be the strategic voice of users of official statistics. The Forum acts as an umbrella organisation for user groups, each of which covers a particular area across the spectrum of official statistics. It enables open and constructive dialogue between users and producers of official statistics and encourages communication across the user community.

Despite his age, Ian Maclean took care of his business until he left us, thus bearing the flag of one of the raison-d’être of the IAOS and of the ISI. We all miss him.

Jean- Louis BODIN
2nd IAOS President (1989-1991)
Former ISI President (1999 – 2001)