

## A Tribute to Albert by George Tiao

I am profoundly sorry that, due to a commitment made a long time ago to teach in Beijing, I shall not be able to attend the memorial session on April 21 for Professor Albert Prat.

Albert was a dear friend. The way I remember him is best shown by the two pictures taken in a restaurant at a mountain-top, *Peña Peak*, near Salamanca in 2003. Just like in the pictures, Albert was a happy human being, caring and warm, and a loving husband.

We first met in Madrid in the summer of 1980 when Professor George Box and I went to Madrid for the first time to give some continuing education lectures on time series organized by Albert and Professor Daniel Peña. We hit it off fabulously right away and I went to Barcelona to see him numerous times in the 1980s to work on various applied statistics topics including forecasting methods, total quality management and statistical software development. He also visited Chicago on a number of occasions.

In the 1990s the Chicago Business School established a campus for EMBA program in Barcelona and I immediately volunteered to participate to see more of the beautiful city and the Prat family.

Over these twenty some years of frequent visits, our friendship, and my admiration of him, grew deeper and deeper. On the serious side, Albert was one of the most prominent applied statisticians in the European community. He had taken the leadership role in the development of statistics software on quality control, seasonal adjustment, time series among other topics. The entire statistical profession owed him a big debt for his foresights, dedication and persistent, never ending effort. He was highly respected, and well like by all.

All of us who are lucky enough to be friends of Albert know a lighter side: His Gourmet fame. There is no question he was a connoisseur of fine food and wine. He took me through so many great places for dinners that at one point I thought I must have visited at least half of the best restaurants in Barcelona (not at all true) But the most unusual part is that he was simply the best cook I knew! I still fondly remember the great meals he and Tina served at their house, on the patio garden you got there in a lift(!), in a hot summer afternoon. The whole process was like a dream. Then there was the occasion in Chicago when he came to my house to demonstrate how to do Paella in the right way. We had to go to a fish market early in the morning to get a huge

variety of seafood. He came at noon to do the preliminaries a couple of hours, and back again at 4:30 to prepare the dinner. As a Chinese rice eater, I had to admit that his Paella was the best rice dish I ever had, and never forgot.

Albert, we miss you.

To close, Barbara and I want to convey our best regards to Tina.