

# AN APPRECIATION OF PETER BOUNPANE

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At work, Pete had three attributes in such measure that they set him quite apart from others, in my view. A usefully complete picture of this complex man would require far more surfaces and angles than three, but these take us quite a ways, I think.

First, Pete had a powerful analytical mind. His memory for detail and relationships, his facility for pulling items into context, his ability to parse, integrate and infer—all these were exceptional in my experience. Having participated with him on the Census Bureau group charged with deciding whether to adjust the census for undercount, and having followed the related writings of experts outside the Bureau, I concluded in the early 90's that Pete was one of a very few people in the world who thoroughly understood the dual system estimator in application.

Second, Pete seemed able to keep track of the logical and empirical relationships among the various constraints in any decision process he was part of, such that he would call the process back to the appropriate previous stage when the constraint set changed. It was common for Pete to point out that we were still proceeding to develop a sample design, an estimator, a data product, an outreach strategy or the like according to a plan that could now be changed because something in the statistical, operational, organizational, or political environment had shifted. I sometimes interpreted this behavior as Pete capriciously changing his mind or just crazy-making. Now I realize, though, that he thought outside the box more facilely than the rest of us and just described what he saw when he saw it...often right in the middle of a meeting.

Third, Pete could calm a potentially acrimonious encounter with census stakeholders more surely than anyone else. Whether in a large group or one-on-one, whether at a planned meeting or spontaneously, whether based on facts, feelings or politics, whether arising from honest difference of opinion or demagoguery—acrimony among outsiders rarely survived an encounter with Pete. It's simple to report how he did it. He afforded respect, he listened intently, and he clarified the relationship between the concerns and what could be done at Census. In the process, I never knew him to promise or even imply something that we couldn't actually do, nor fail to follow up back home on things we could do. Of course,

he knew the difference. Simple to report how he did it, but mighty difficult to do it oneself, I've found!

Working with Peter Bounpane could be frustrating and he would become frustrated, too. Wherever he was placed, though, and whatever he was asked to do, he brought to bear his formidable abilities. Perhaps this strong sense of dedication and responsibility in all circumstances belongs with my first three as an attribute that set Pete apart. I think so.

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