

Longtime JHU Economist Carl Christ dies at 93 | Economics

Carl Christ, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Economics at Johns Hopkins University, passed away on April 21, 2017. Professor Christ was born on September 19, 1923 in Chicago and graduated from the University of Chicago Lab School. He earned his BS in Physics from the University in Chicago in 1943 and his Ph.D. in Economics from the same institution in 1950. He worked as a Junior Physicist on the Manhattan Project in Chicago from 1943 to 1945 and was an Instructor in Physics at Princeton University from 1945 to 1946, after which he enrolled in the graduate program in the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago. He was a Research Associate at the Cowles Commission at Chicago from 1949-1950. He moved to the Department of Economics at Johns Hopkins in 1950, where he served on the faculty until 1955, when he moved back to the Department of Economics at the University of Chicago, where he served as Associate Professor from 1955 to 1961. In 1961, he returned to Johns Hopkins as Professor, where he remained until he retired in 2005 and assumed Emeritus status.

Carl Christ had a distinguished record of scholarship across multiple topics. His interests ranged from econometric methods, especially the testing and evaluation of econometric models, to monetary and fiscal policy and to the history of econometrics. His work on macroeconomic models was rooted in the Cowles Commission tradition of structural econometric models based solidly on economic theory and careful attention to identification, endogeneity, and consistent and efficient estimation. He wrote a seminal paper on the forecast error variances from those types of models and on their sensitivity to model specification. He authored a widely used introductory econometrics textbook in 1966, *Econometric Models and Methods*, which popularized the structural econometric approach. The textbook was translated into several languages. In the area of monetary and fiscal policy, his major contribution was a deep incorporation of the federal budget constraint in all its dimensions—fiscal, monetary, reserves, debt, and so on—into macroeconomic models, which had inadequately incorporated those features prior to his work. He showed that policy multipliers were very different when the budget constraint was properly modeled. His interest in the history of econometric methods was also strong, and he wrote a history of the Cowles Commission during its first 20 years which was published in 1952, an expanded version of which appeared in the *Journal of Economic Literature* in 1994, and he wrote a history of the founding of the Econometric Society as well as several other pieces on the history of quantitative analysis. He was a student and admirer of Tjalling Koopmans and, with Martin Beckmann and Marc Nerlove, edited the Scientific Papers of Koopmans. A symposium in his honor where papers relating to his research were presented was held at Johns Hopkins in 1995 and was published in the *Journal of Econometrics* in 1998.

Christ served in numerous professional and department capacities during his career. He served in multiple capacities of the American Economic Association, including serving as Vice President, serving on its Executive Committee, chairing several other committees, and serving on the Editorial Board of the American Economic Review. He served in numerous roles for the National Bureau of Economic Research, including service as a Member, Vice Chair, and Chair of its Board of Directors. He served on the Council of the Econometric Society and in several other capacities for the Society. He was an elected Fellow of the Econometric Society and the American Statistical Association and received many other citations and awards. At Johns Hopkins, he served as Chair of the Economics

Department twice, from 1961 to 1966 and from 1969 to 1970. He also served on numerous university committees throughout his career and into his time as Emeritus Professor. The Department of Economics at Johns Hopkins has a named professorship as well as a named graduate student fellowship in his honor.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, the former Phyllis Tatsch.

A memorial service will be held at Johns Hopkins at a future date.

Donations in Carl Christ's honor can be made either by sending a payment to Ms. Donna Althoff, Department of Economics, Johns Hopkins University, 3400 N. Charles Street, Baltimore MD 21218, or by [donating online](#) where you should click on "secure online giving form" and designate that your gift be given to "Other" and then to "Economics Department Carl Christ Fellowship."

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