

## INTERVIEW WITH Bud Goode



“When the Green Bay Packers pay \$14,000,000 to Reggie White, the ex-Eagle defensive end, they are getting a player who earns 16 sacks in a 16-game season.”

*Bud Goode lives in Studio City, California, and is active as a statistical consultant to many of the National Football League coaches. His statistical services have been purchased by 21 of 28 teams. Goode has written for The New York Times, Sports Illustrated, The Washington Post, Inside Sports, “PRO” magazine, and the Super Bowl program. In August 1993, he was recognized by the American Statistical Association for his pioneering work in statistical analysis of sports and he is currently active in teaching statistics concepts with sports at Belmont High School in Los Angeles, California.*

**Aczel:** How did you first become interested in statistics and what about the field caught your attention?

**Goode:** I took my first course in introductory statistics at Occidental College in 1941 as a freshman in the Department of Physical Education. The department head, Dr. Carl Trieb, turned out 9 of the top 10 scores in the annual test for phys-ed teachers (in the Los Angeles City Unified School District). Simple reason: His brother, Dr. Martin Trieb, ran the Boys’ Phys Ed Department.

The course was called “Tests and Measurements.” Our text was the little red book by Professor R. A. Fisher. I still have it. The concepts of central ten-

dency, variation, and correlation were so appealing I thought of giving up religion for statistics. The war came along and when I returned, having been blessed with a full disability pardon from the service in 1946, I would no longer fill the physical requirements of phys ed. I used that as an excuse to move to another major (psychology—and more statistics).

**Aczel:** Did you ever expect that the ASA would honor your work as they did in August of 1993?

**Goode:** No. Although I had started my research circa 1961 (the head writer on the Groucho Marx “You Bet Your Life” TV show was responsible for this new direction), I had, indeed, been doing basic statistical research, using an old 1403 computer and later the IBM 7094 at UCLA, but I did not know how much my work had penetrated the ASA hallways. It was a surprise when Stu called me.

**Aczel:** When did you find out?

**Goode:** ASA President Elect, Stu Hunter, called before the Boston convention in 92 and advised that he was considering some kind of luncheon with me speaking for 30 minutes . . . but I couldn’t make it to Boston because of modest health problems. He hoped I could do both the Boston and San Francisco conventions. I obviously made the trip to Frisco.