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Famous People Related to Actuarial Science

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If you are reading this article, chances are you have heard about actuaries or actuarial science before, but the average person is likely unaware of those terms. What people might not realize is that there are many famous individuals connected with this field. These are some of the exemplary individuals related to, but not always known for, actuarial science.

- **Sir Edmond Halley.** Largely known for his contributions to astronomy and calculating the orbit of the comet named after him (Halley's comet), many forget that Sir Edmond Halley was also a mathematician. He is credited with developing one of the first life tables in 1693, which in turn influenced the creation of actuarial science.
- **Oswald Jacoby.** A man of many talents, Oswald Jacoby was a card player, war veteran, writer and actuary. He is considered one of the greatest bridge players of all time and is credited with inventing the Jacoby transfer. He also made contributions to counterintelligence during World War II and went on to write numerous books on mathematics. In the actuarial circle, Jacoby, at the age of 21, was the youngest person to become a fellow of the Society of Actuaries (SOA) until Roy Ju, FSA, CERA, MAAA, did so at age 20 in 2015.
- **Franz Kafka.** Considered to be one of the most influential authors in the 20th century, Franz Kafka's works include *The Metamorphosis*, *The Trial* and *The Castle*, to name a few. Kafka worked as an insurance executive during the day—handling claims as well as other business functions, some of which would be considered actuarial in today's world.
- **Bill James and John Dewan, FSA.** Sports enthusiasts might know Bill James as the father of Sabermetrics, the field of statistical analysis in baseball, or from the novel *Moneyball* by Michael Lewis. James started to challenge conventional baseball wisdom through the use of statistical analysis in 1977, after publishing his annual baseball extract. Soon after, John Dewan, an actuary, started working

with James to find market inefficiencies and start baseball-focused companies such as STATS LLC, which he later sold to Fox Sports. James was named one of *Time* magazine's 100 most influential people in the world in 2006.

- **Howard Winklevoss, MAAA.** Those who have seen the movie *The Social Network* or have read about the history of Facebook are familiar with twins Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss. Their father, Howard Winklevoss, is an actuary. He is the founder of Winklevoss Consultants, a pension and benefits management firm.
- **Anette Norberg.** Winner of the Olympic Gold Medal in curling in 2006 and 2010, Anette Norberg is the first skipper in Olympic curling history to defend her title. Norberg was also the chief actuary at Nordea Bank AB and later appeared as a contestant on Swedish TV's *Let's Dance 2013*.
- **Warren Buffett.** One of the wealthiest people in the world, Warren Buffett almost chose a career in actuarial science after meeting a Geico vice president in 1951. Instead, he sold all the stocks he owned at the time and bought 350 shares of Geico. Currently, he is the largest shareholder of Berkshire Hathaway, which owns Geico and has numerous shares in many insurance and reinsurance companies.
- **Elizur Wright.** A prominent member of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833, Elizur Wright was also one of the first people to study insurance through mathematics. He was the main driver behind creating laws that would require insurance companies to hold reserves. He also created actuarial tables to help insurance companies set premiums.
- **Christine Hofbeck, FSA, MAAA.** If you watched season 35 of *Survivor*, "Heroes vs. Healers vs. Hustlers," you are well aware of Christine Hofbeck, who was voted Player of the Season by fans and was a runner-up on the show. Before that, she was a vice president and actuary, pricing and predictive analytics, for a large insurer and is currently a member of the SOA Board of Directors.

Did I miss anyone? Is there anyone on the list that doesn't belong? If so, please let me know. ■



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