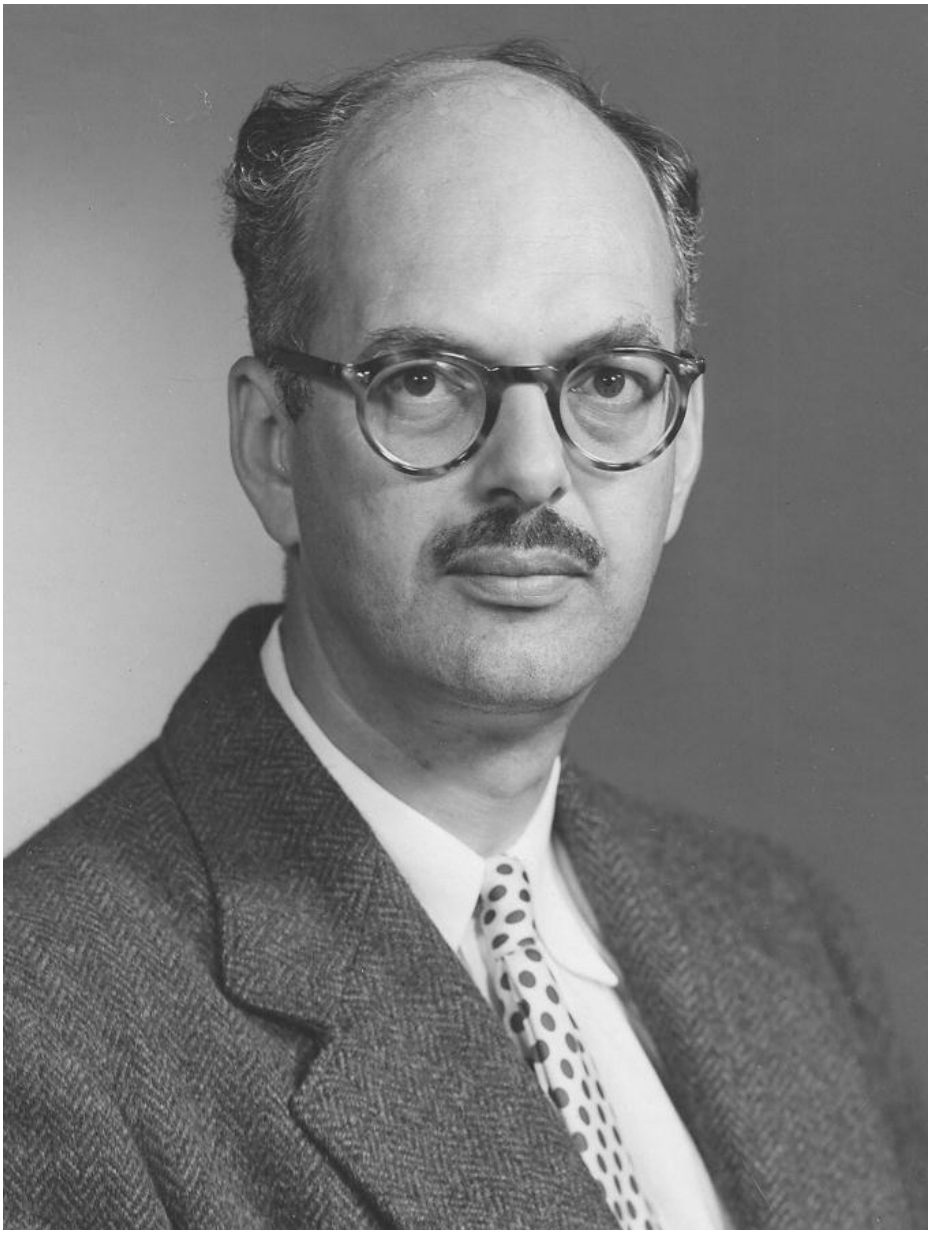
Nathan Keyfitz
1913-2010



Nathan Keyfitz was born and educated in Montreal, Canada. In 1936, two years after receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from McGill University, he joined the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, now Statistics Canada, as a clerk, reaching the post of senior research statistician in 1950. He also found time to seek a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago (1952). In 1959, Keyfitz's career veered toward academia–a professorship at the University of Toronto. In 1963, he was appointed professor of sociology at the University of Chicago where, at age fifty, his exceptionally productive career as a researcher in demography began. Subsequently, he held successive appointments as professor of demography at the University of California, Berkeley, and as professor of sociology at Harvard University (from 1972 to 1981). After his retirement from Harvard, he taught at Ohio State University. Subsequently, for ten years (until 1993) Keyfitz led the population program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, Austria.

At various times, Keyfitz also consulted, taught, or conducted research in many countries, but fore-most in Indonesia–where his research and consulting activities began in the 1950s and continued intermittently over four decades. Keyfitz was president of the Population Association of America in 1970–71, and he received the Association's Mindel C. Sheps award in 1976. He is a member of the Royal Society of Canada, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

Keyfitz is best known for his work in mathematical demography, a branch of demography that his books largely defined for generations of students. In the early 1960s, he began to gather the literature on the application of mathematics to population, dispersed in the journals of many disciplines, and set out the findings in a uniform notation. Keyfitz gave his formulas meaning and interest by applying them to real data, making early use of the mainframe computers that were just then appearing. This work yielded his book, *Introduction to the Mathematics of Population* (1968), and a systematic compilation of country-level demographic estimates produced by his models, *World Population Growth* (1968, coauthored with Wilhelm Flieger). Somewhat dissatisfied with the rather abstract character of his initial effort, Keyfitz went on to write another book, *Applied Mathematical Demography* (1977), in which he examined "a great number of questions that could be dealt with mathematically and that involved techniques needed by demographers" (Van der Tak 1991, p. 287).

Keyfitz's influence on the field of demography and population studies is not limited to mathematical demography. Once immersed in demographic research, he broadened his research interests to substantive issues raised by population dynamics. His book *Population Change and Social Policy* (1982) collects a number of his articles and essays on topics ranging from the environmental effects of population growth to the socioeconomic implications of population aging.

Keyfitz, who was married to Beatrice (Orkin) Keyfitz from 1939 until her death in October 2009, had two children, Barbara and Robert.

He died on April 9, 2010 at the age of 96. A memorial service honouring the life of Keyfitz was held on April 13 at the Bigelow Chapel in Mount Auburn Cemetery.