

Roberto Mariano, Economics

AUGUST 12, 2025 | **VOL 72 ISSUE 2 ([HTTPS://ALMANAC.UPENN.EDU/VOLUME-72-NUMBER-2](https://almanac.upenn.edu/volume-72-number-2))** | **DEATHS** | **PRINT**



Roberto Mariano

Roberto (Bobby) S. Mariano, an emeritus professor of economics in the School of Arts & Sciences, died on April 17. He was 81.

Born in the city of Muntinlupa in the Philippines, Dr. Mariano graduated from the Ateneo de Manila high school (1958) and college (1962). Also in 1962, Dr. Mariano received an MS in statistics from the University of the Philippines. He then came to the U.S., where he received his MS in mathematics from the University of Illinois in 1963 and his PhD from Stanford University in 1970. He briefly took a faculty position at the School of Economics at the University of the Philippines, but then accepted a visiting lectureship in economics at the Wharton School at Penn in 1971. Two years later he joined the standing faculty as an untenured associate professor. The economics department moved to the School of Arts & Sciences in 1974. There, he became a full professor in 1980. While at Penn, Dr. Mariano chaired the University Council's Committee on International Programs.

At Penn, Dr. Mariano conducted research on economic statistical models of commodities, including tin, rubber and wheat, and on the economy of the Philippines. He co-created the Diebold-Mariano test to evaluate forecast accuracy; the test has become a widely-used tool in econometrics. He was a fellow of the Econometric Society, serving on its executive council representing Southeast and South Asia, and served on the governing council of the International Association for Statistical Computing. His editorial contributions included service on the boards of the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *International Economic Review*, and *Econometric Theory*. He was a consultant on econometric modeling for forecasting and policy analysis for various central banks, government ministries, stock exchanges, and private companies in Asia and the U.S. In 2022, he was appointed by Pope Francis to serve as a board member of the Supervisory and Financial Information Authority (ASIF), the Holy See's financial intelligence and anti-money laundering unit.

In 2002, Dr. Mariano was appointed the founding dean of the School of Economics and Social Science at Singapore Management University (SMU), and his impact on SMU's formative years was profound and enduring. At SMU, he oversaw the intake of the inaugural classes of the economics and social science bachelor's programs and served as the vice provost for research and deputy director of the Wharton-SMU Research Centre, a collaboration between SMU and Penn. He was dean of SMU's School of Economics from 2007 to 2010; during his tenure, he added three graduate programs: the master of science in applied economics, master of science in economics, and the PhD in economics.

Dr. Mariano retired from Penn in 2004 and took emeritus status; in his retirement, he served on the council of the Penn Association of Senior & Emeritus Faculty (PASEF).

"Bobby's wisdom, kindness, and generosity touched not only his family's lives, but the lives of all the students, colleagues, and friends who knew him," said Dr. Mariano's family. "His passion, commitment, zest for life, and love for his family and friends were hallmarks of his remarkable journey. Bobby's love, laughter, and spirit live on in the countless lives Bobby touched."

Dr. Mariano is survived by his wife, Julie; his son, Michael; his sister, Nomy; and numerous nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Philippine Jesuit Foundation, P.O. Box 312, New York, NY 10028, or by email at pjf@phjesuits.us (<mailto:pjf@phjesuits.us>). Please note that your donation is for the "ADMU Scholarship Fund (R. Mariano gift)."