

Thank you, Steve, for that tremendous introduction, thank you, the committee, for this great honor, and thank you all for being here to share this moment with me.

In those old graduate-school days, we used to sit at the back row of the classroom, admiring the names on the COPSS Award list. I never imaged that one day I could be standing here, receiving this great honor, and having my name on that list; but we did figure out that “Peter” is perhaps a good name to have.

This has been a tremendous year for me. First, my son James was born on February 9th, at 10:22PM, that is, 22:22. Then, in March I was told the winning of the COPSS Award, the 22nd award! Interesting coincidence.

I know I am a very lucky guy, but I did not realize that I am SOOOO much blessed.

I am very lucky to have chosen statistics as my life-long career, and I am grateful to the people who have helped (or forced) me with that decision. Statistics has allowed me the opportunities to be both indulged in mathematics and fascinated by science. The longer I stay in this field, the more I love its people and the more I admire its upbeat yet benign spirit. Unlike in some other fields, we can more or less freely exchange ideas, read others’ technical reports and let others read ours, from which I have benefited a lot; unlike in some other fields, we can be very versatile and work on many different subjects and are still under the big “statistics” umbrella, from which I have enjoyed a lot. Because of these collaborative nature and benign spirits, much of my work results from intensive collaborations with other people. Thus, this great honor ought to be shared by all my collaborators, especially Rong Chen, Augustine Kong, Chip Lawrence, Wing Wong, and many of my students.

No lawn looks nice without being cared and mowed, and no life grows great without being loved and disciplined. I am very lucky to have met many great people who have influenced me in one way or another; they collectively shaped my life and defined who I am. I thank all those people who have loved me, encouraged me, and helped me; all those people who have taught me, entertained me, and inspired me; all those people who have harnessed me, disciplined me, and perhaps even made decisions for me.

Other than my parents, the person who influenced me the most while I was pondering over my future at age 22 was Professor Bill Strawderman. He not only taught me a beautiful course on mathematical statistics but also wrote me a fabulous recommendation letter enabling me to go somewhere else --- such as the University of Chicago. In Chicago, I had the honor and luck to work closely then, and ever since, with my thesis advisors Professors Wing Wong and Augustine Kong. They taught me many things including how to think critically and scientifically, how to formulate a meaningful research question, and how to put one’s heart in what he does. Their devotions to science are always my inspiration. Professor Don Rubin at Harvard was both my first boss and my post-PhD mentor and my current boss. He not only taught me how to think about statistics beyond its mathematical components, but also hired me repeatedly. Professor Persi Diaconis has been always inspiring, supportive, and nurturing to me since I first met

him at the University of Chicago. Besides teaching me about group theory and Markov chains, he persuaded me to spend 6 wonderful years being nurtured in another great Statistics Department ---- located in the famous west campus of Harvard. During my 6-years' stay, my Stanford colleagues have set me a very high standard through their own doings. I learnt from them that dedicated statisticians should always be inspired to challenge themselves. Dr. Chip Lawrence from the Wadsworth lab is responsible for leading me into the wonderful new land of bioinformatics. I have enjoyed immensely the fruitful collaborations with him in the past 10 years.

I am very lucky to have a pair of wonderful parents. They taught me to love science, to be honest, and to be focused. I remember that they spent days and nights transcribing a thick mathematics book for me when I was 11. I remember that they biked over the whole city trying to buy some science books for me when I was 13. I also remember that they made me come to the US to seek after a higher goal when I was 21. Without their love, their directions, and their true belief in me, I would have gone nowhere.

I am very lucky to have a wonderful wife Wei. I am most grateful to her for her love, her inspiration, her wholehearted support, her patience, and her persistence in the past nine years. She has made me a more complete and caring human being; and a stronger, better, and cleaner man. My son James is a recent joy of my life. I'll report to you later how he becomes a source of my inspirations.

Yesterday, August 13th, was the 16th anniversary of my first arrival in the US. Sixteen years ago exactly today, I walked on the street of New York City for the first time in my life. While I walked on the 42nd, I felt like being in a movie. That was my first time to see so closely so many tall buildings lumping together --- that was my first impression of the city, and of the US. Sixteen years later, in the very same city and on the very same day, I am receiving one of the highest honors in the statistical science profession. The United States of America is perhaps the only country in the world that can make this possible. I love American spirit and I love our statistics profession. Thank you.