Béla Gyires
1909–2001

Emeritus professor of Debrecen University and doyen of the Hungarian mathematicians Béla Gyires passed away in Budapest on August 26, 2001, at the age of 92. His research activity embraced matrix theory, linear algebra, probability theory and mathematical statistics. He belonged to those few outstanding mathematicians who deliberately raised no strict boundary between pure and applied mathematics. He left us about hundred papers. His nicest, most important and best known results were in linear statistics. Many of his results are now cited in monographs and textbooks. (A more detailed review of his scientific work follows separately.)

Béla Gyires was born on March 29, 1909 in Zágráb (Zagreb). His father was a clerk of the Hungarian State Railways. After the first World War his family moved to Debrecen, where he finished secondary school. He graduated at the Péter Pázmány University at Budapest and got his Ph.D. degree from the József Nádor Technical University, Budapest. In his reminiscences he considers as his master Charles Jordan (Jordán Károly). After the second World War in 1945 he got post at the side of Prof. O. Varga in the Mathematical Seminar (Chair) of Debrecen University. He was promoted to a private-docent in 1946, and from that time for 55 years he served our University and became a renowed professor of it. He not only witnessed the development, which led from a two-person-staff Seminar to a big Institute of Mathematics and Informatics with seventy highly qualified mathematicians, but he was the most active creator, and for a long period the director of this institution. He was the founder and for thirty years the head of the Department of Probability and Applied Mathematics. He had a decisive role in including in the university-curriculum such highly important modern fields as probability theory, mathematical statistics, computer science and informatics. He was a highly esteemed and much liked teacher of generations of mathematics students. His fate granted him not only a long, but also an active life lasting until the last hours. His book: Linear approximations in convex metric spaces and the application in the mixture theory of probability theory, written upon request, appeared when he was 84. At the time of his death he had still accepted but not yet appeared papers, and who knows how many plans in his mind.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected him in 1987 as a corresponding, and in 1990 as an ordinary member. He was doctor honoris causa of our University, and a honorary freeman of his city Debrecen. In 1980 he was awarded the Hungarian National Prize (Állami díj) and in 1999, on his 90th birthday, the Middle Cross of the Hungarian Republic.

He held leading positions in scientific societies and was honorary member of diverse institutions. He was an active member of the Mathematical Committee, as well as the Committee for Computer Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences until the end of his life. He was member of the Biometric Society, the International Statistical Institute, the Bernoulli Society and other international scientific societies. Also he worked as member of the editorial board of several international journals, in particular of this journal for nearly fifty years. He was honorary president of the

János Bolyai Mathematical Society and a honorary member of the János Neumann Society of Computer Science.

He spent his last years with his wife in Budapest, where his daughter, a professor of pharmacology, and his son, a professor of computer science (working since a decade in the USA) are living. The loss of his wife was a painful blow on him. He survived her one year only.

He was a very thoughtful man with high moral and ethical standards, highly honored an esteemed by his colleagues and former students. His passing away is a painful loss for the Hungarian and also for the International mathematical community.

His colleagues and the Editorial Board of this Journal say with heavy heart a final farewell to him.

The Editors