**Fifty years ago!**

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I met [Gary L. Lilien](https://directory.smeal.psu.edu/g5l), for the first time, exactly fifty years ago! He was one of the youngest members of the ***Management Science Group*** at the MIT Sloan School of Management. Well before it became the first ***Marketing Science Center***, the department comprised [John D. C. Little](https://mitsloan.mit.edu/faculty/directory/john-d-c-little) – a “model builder” –, [Glen L. Urban](https://mitsloan.mit.edu/faculty/directory/glen-urban) – a “model coder” –, and [Alvin J. Silk](https://www.hbs.edu/news/releases/Pages/alvin-silk-obituary.aspx) – a “model estimator”. Gary was at the epicenter of these three vertices. Already then, his main field of interest was ***[Marketing Engineering](https://www.amazon.com/Principles-Marketing-Engineering-Analytics-Lilien/dp/0985764821/ref=sr_1_2?crid=X9WR9TH06YPR&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.ID_Up6vZih4lNpGJm_1mwsznh43Alf3cABlpZVW4BWxKwCGMKpdMmTN41fhJGWS-AcltMJ4cyYJ_PtQLNNjVW2cBodsgzk5K6YAg9Lv8PiQliTe-JDWoRroVqhxGCi3hVyi7DBERPSA0fUMckfgf_Njp76XhpMdv8cvudYhH9HM-9yVaRPN-fDnJ2-EUY5lzydCkp6G5BSPDC7LLSbDyHgEgDMf9qi7gsIKib1m06aw.yMwPOR5aPhHyWjsDvPb_UER6H-asUFyIUVUJyf9VrM8&dib_tag=se&keywords=gary+l+lilien&qid=1717571860&sprefix=gary+l+lilien%2Caps%2C1080&sr=8-2)***: making mathematical models, computer code, and statistical methods work together to solve real-life problems; improve decision-making; and, finally, make businesses more efficient.

In the mid-seventies, these four exceptional professors were surrounded by a handful of doctoral students: John, yours truly, Gilles, Scott, Shlomo, and a few others: Raphaël, Dan, Bob, Sylvia, who like synapses were linking the ***Marketing Science Center*** to the other departments of the Institute. At that time, Robust Statistical Methods, Artificial Intelligence, Systems Dynamics, Decision Theory, and Computer Science were all the rage at MIT. We all went through the revolution from paper to graphic terminals. The first microcomputers challenged the last programmable calculators. None of us had the slightest idea of what would happen next – word processors, spreadsheets, relational databases, object-oriented languages, mouse and touch-screen interfaces, handhelds, portable computers, internet, tablets, smartphones, etc. – but we had a strong feeling, not to say the certainty, that our world would irreversibly change. And, that we would be part of it…

I couldn’t have dreamed of a better advisor than Gary. His creativity and curiosity were legendary. I had never seen someone work harder; think smarter; write and run faster. Most importantly, he was humble, attentive to others, and always available. He had the ability to listen to others and the strength to decide under uncertainty, if not adversity. He learned by doing, from his observation of how *complex* reality was and how *relative* our understanding of it was too. His attitude was that of an ***Engineer*** who has to make things work together, even when the wheels grind or stop. Unsurprisingly, he was seconded by three exceptional women: his first wife, our dear Dorothy; his wonderful daughter, Amy; and, later, his lovely second wife, Ronnie. From a professional standpoint, the Pennsylvania State University and the [Institute for the Study of Business Markets](https://isbm.org/) provided him with the perfect environment to exert his creativity and shape his vision of the future of ***Marketing Engineering***.

Fifty years later, if I could work for a PhD again, I would want to work under his guidance. I would tell him that I wanted to study the impact of *Blockchain Technologies* on our world. He would probably tell me that it’s not a good idea! I would work hard at convincing him… Finally, we would write together “***A Model-Based Methodology for Assessing Markets Response to Bitcoin***”. While traveling around the world giving seminars we would meet to enjoy some good food and… fine wines. We would get old without fears and regrets and stay best friends for another fifty years!

Thank you! Gary, for graciously sharing your creativity, for your hard work, and for your friendship. As an advisor, a colleague, and an occasional bartender at the “***Œuf au Plat***” in Liège (see enclosed picture), you taught me that Albert Einstein was right. “*Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others, it is the only means.*”

Gary, helping at the bar of “***L’*** ***Œuf au Plat***” in Liège, Belgium, 1991.

