

WALDO TOBLER
Professor Emeritus
University of California, Santa Barbara

Waldo Tobler received his degrees in Geography from the University of Washington in Seattle, spent several years at the University of Michigan, and is currently Professor Emeritus at the University of California in Santa Barbara. Until his retirement he held the positions of Professor of Geography and Professor of Statistics at the same institution. The University of Zurich, Switzerland, awarded him a Doctorate *honoris causa* in 1988.

Courses taught have included the History of Cartography, Geographic Transformations, and Migration. Dr. Tobler was one of the principal investigators and a Senior Scientist in the National Science Foundation sponsored National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis. He has used computers in geographic research for more than 40 years, with emphasis on mathematical modeling and graphic interpretations. Well known for his publications, he formulated the “first law of geography” in 1970 while producing a computer movie, and is the inventor of novel and unusual map projections, among which was the first derivation of the partial differential equations for area cartograms. He also invented a method for smooth two-dimensional mass-preserving areal data redistribution.

Committee work involved the National Research Council, most recently the Board on Earth Sciences. He has been on the editorial board of several journals, including *The American Cartographer*, *Journal of Regional Science*, *Geographical Analysis*, and the *International Journal of Geographical Information Systems*. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States and, until his retirement, was a member of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain. He was a charter member of the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association, a council member of the Regional Science Association, member and chairman of the Mathematical Social Science Board, and served as the US delegate to the International Geographical Union Commission on Geographical Data Processing and Sensing.

Recent work involved building a global, latitude-longitude oriented, demographic information base with resolution two orders of magnitude better than was previously available. His latest ideas concern the development of smooth finite element and categorical pycnophylactic geographic information reallocation models. In July of 1999 he presented a keynote speech, “The World is Shriveling as it Shrinks,” at the ESRI International User Conference, and was the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award in GIS by ESRI. Taylor and Francis of London recently published a map projection book, co-authored with Q. Yang of China and the late John Snyder. Current interests relate to ideas in computational geography including the analysis of geographical vector fields and the development of migration and of global trade models. His recent presentations on these subjects in Oregon, London, and Paris were presented using Microsoft’s Power Point. More detail can be found at: <http://www.geog.ucsb.edu/~tobler>.

Also see a short autobiography: W. Tobler, 2002, “**Ma Vie: Growing Up in America and Europe,**” in *Geographical Voices*, W. Pitts and P. Gould, eds., University of Syracuse Press; Syracuse; pages 292–322.