

Tony Atkinson, my hero

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In April 2015, I completed an appreciation of Tony's contributions to Economics. The opening paragraphs state:

It is an honour to write about Tony Atkinson's contributions to economics ... From a personal point of view, I owe Tony a huge amount for his exemplary supervision of my doctoral thesis, his friendly but incisive comments on later research, and his ever-present general encouragement, support, and inspiration. For more than thirty-five years, answering the 'What would Tony think?' question has been a means by which I and many of my contemporaries have assessed our own research. (Our salutes to him are collected in Jenkins and Micklewright, 2007.) These personal benefits are of course separate from the immense contributions to economics that Tony has made ...

Tony Atkinson has made fundamental and original theoretical contributions to economics in general, and to public economics and the analysis of economic inequality in particular. He has also undertaken original and innovative empirical analysis of economic inequalities, and of their relationship to economic institutions such as the welfare state. His work has brought the analysis of distributional issues back to a central position in economics, arguably a position that it has not had since the period of the Classical economists of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It is no overstatement to say that the modern analysis of economic inequality started with Tony's 1970 paper in the *Journal of Economic Theory*. (Jenkins, 2017: 1151–2)

I cannot post the published version of the essay online, but I would be pleased to email a personal copy of a pre-publication version to anyone who wishes to have one.

The sentences above do not communicate enough about Tony's personal qualities – he was a role model in those as with everything else. He was sagacious in so many fields and yet so modest and kind, and the epitome of decency, humanity, and collegiality. Despite being very busy, Tony found time for so many of us. He was a continuing source of encouragement, support, and inspiration. He will be sorely missed. Tony is and will remain my hero.

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Author biography

Stephen P. Jenkins is Professor of Economic and Social Policy at LSE and has been Head of the Department of Social Policy since September 2016. His research focuses on income inequality, poverty and mobility, addressing issues such as the growth in top incomes and their contribution to recent increases in inequality, measurement of poverty persistence, and factors triggering exits from a poverty spell. He also researches related topics such as labour market participation and the tax and benefit system. He served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Economic Inequality* from 2014–17.