



Veli-Pekka Järveläinen

* 11.5.1938 † 5.6.2022

Professor Emeritus of Private Forestry at the University of Helsinki Veli-Pekka Järveläinen died on 5 June 2022 in Tampere at the age of 84. He was born on 11 May 1938 in Kuopio where he spent his childhood and adolescence. His father, Tauno Järveläinen, was a central figure in the region as chief forester of the North Savo Forest Board, and growing up watching his father, Veli-Pekka learned to understand the problems faced by private forest owners.

It was therefore not a surprise when, after graduating from upper secondary school in Kuopio in spring 1957, Veli-Pekka Järveläinen applied to the University of Helsinki to study forest economics at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry.

The strong growth of forest economy and industry in the 1950s and 1960s had raised concerns about securing sufficient forest resources. Within a short period of time, several working groups were set up to try to calculate how forests should be felled and managed in order to preserve and even improve felling potential. Some targets were set, but they all had the same problem: achieving them depended 70% on the decisions made concerning the roughly 300 000 privately owned forest properties,

or forest holdings, in our country. Too little was known about their owners, their decision-making behaviour and other, non-forestry-related factors influencing their decisions.

As Veli-Pekka Järveläinen earned his degree in forestry in March 1962, the Departments of Forest Economics at the University of Helsinki and the Finnish Forest Research Institute were about to launch a study on private forest ownership. Järveläinen was immediately recruited as a postgraduate student. His research task was to explain the observed differences in private forest owners' motivation to manage their forests.

In his 1971 doctoral thesis entitled *Factors Influencing Silvicultural Activity: A Study of the Influence of Attitudes, Individual Farm Backgrounds and Regional Conditions on the Silvicultural Activity of Forest Owners in Karstula and Jamsa, Finland*, Veli-Pekka Järveläinen combined approaches and methods applied in sociology with the traditional research method of forest economics. Following this, he expanded his field of interest and received access to the data of the national drain study of the Finnish Forest Research Institute. Around this time, Veli-Pekka Järveläinen

also became a junior researcher at the State Commission of Agriculture and Forestry in 1972, and continued working there as a senior researcher until 1985.

He produced several research publications during this period, of which the most notable are his works analysing the felling behaviour of private forest owners, the influence of consultation on the use of felling potential in private forests and the consequences of the change in the structure of the forest owner community.

Veli-Pekka Järveläinen gained more recognition and became a key expert in private forestry in forest planning and when tackling various issues in forest policy. This also marked the beginning of his international cooperation. Veli-Pekka Järveläinen was appointed chair of a working group at the IUFRO World Congress (International Union of Forest Research Organizations) in Oslo in 1976. Five years later, in Kyoto, Japan, his role changed to leader of Working Party 4.06 Forest Policy. He continued as deputy leader after the Ljubljana Congress all the way until the Montreal Congress in 1990.

In the mid-1980s, Veli-Pekka shifted his focus to the University of Helsinki and teaching. He had already held the position of docent of forest economics since 1976 and had served temporarily as acting professor of the same discipline. In 1985, the position of associate professor of forestry became available at the faculty. Veli-Pekka

Järveläinen applied and was selected, although the title was changed to associate professor of private forestry, which described the scope of the role more accurately. In 1988 it was made a full professorship.

The Finnish Society of Forest Science was important to Veli-Pekka Järveläinen from the early days of his research career. He served as a member of its board 1972–1979 and as a member of its Science and Programme Policy Committee 1975–1976. At his initiative, a subdivision in forest economics was established under the society in 1988, and he was naturally appointed its director. Järveläinen served as vice-chair of the board of the society 1994–1995 and as chair 1995–1997. He was made an honorary member of the Finnish Society of Forest Science in 1999.

Veli-Pekka Järveläinen was invited to become a member of the Finnish Academy of Science and Letters in 1995.

Veli-Pekka Järveläinen was known as an even-tempered researcher who would delve deeply into issues. His manner was more reminiscent of a master of the house from Häme lighting his short-stemmed pipe than a jovial Savonian. His parents' roots could be traced back to Häme and it was there, in Tampere, that he also moved after retirement. He would continue to keep an eye on what was happening in the field of forestry and delighted readers with his sharp, perceptive commentary articles in newspapers.

Matti Keltikangas