LARRY D. ATWOOD, 55, a School of Medicine professor of neurology and School of Public Health professor of biostatistics, on June 1, 2012.

Atwood earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mathematical sciences from the University of Texas at Dallas. In 1986, he received a doctorate in computer science from the University of North Texas and spent the next four years in postdoctoral training in statistical genetics at the Louisiana State University Medical Center.

After his postdoctoral work, Atwood joined the Southwest Foundation for Biomedical Research in San Antonio and later the Division of Epidemiology and the Institute of Human Genetics at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

In 2001, Atwood joined the Framingham Heart Study in Boston as a senior geneticist. The multi-generational epidemiological study, begun in 1948 by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), has been run by BU since 1971 under NIH contract.

He later cochaired the Framingham Genetics Steering Committee and was director of both the Framingham Genetics Data Management Group and the Framingham Genetics Laboratory. He also was codirector of SNP Health Association Resource (SHARE), a project to search the human genome for genetic variants affecting hundreds of traits that have been measured in the Framingham participants since 1948.

Atwood’s primary research interest was the genetics of complex diseases, particularly obesity. Madeline Rosenberger (COM’14) (GRS’55), 84, a College of Arts & Sciences professor emeritus of biology, on December 17, 2012.

Slechta was born in New York, N.Y., and earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Clark University and a PhD from BU.

During his early research work at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, he contributed to the development of the birth control pill, according to the Bedford Minuteman. At Boston University, Slechta focused on reproductive physiology. He retired in 1991.

A 50-year resident of Bedford, Mass., Slechta was a prominent figure requirements definition, software architecture for distributed systems, and information technology project management.

Before embarking on an academic career, Brackett spent 17 years in industry, advancing major computer-based systems. He was one of the founders of SofTech, a Boston-based software company, which in 15 years grew from a staff of 5 to more than 700, with offices in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Japan. As vice president of software production, he managed the company’s software development projects for large commercial and government clients. He later was SofTech’s president and CEO and a director of the company from 1976 to 1984, and was vice president of the business products division of Infocom, Inc.

“John was a dedicated instructor with a vision to develop a PhD program in software engineering,” says David Castaño, an ENG professor and chair of the electrical and computer engineering department. “He joined the Wang Institute of Graduate Studies and subsequently Boston University to instantiate this vision, and he created a graduate curriculum of professional software engineering courses. For his efforts, he was nominated for the Metcalf Award, BU’s highest recognition for excellence in teaching.

“John became an emeritus professor in 1999,” Castaño says, “but continued contributing to the department’s software engineering efforts by teaching part-time. He remained passionate about his curricular vision over the years, participating in a national effort, the Integrated Software & Systems Engineering Curriculum Project, to develop a graduate curriculum for teaching software engineering.”

Beyond BU, Brackett delivered lectures on software engineering and project management for the master’s program in engineering management at Tufts University, the National...
in town, and he had a keen interest in preserving its history. He was a member of the Historic District Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Friends of the Bedford Free Public Library. He also served as president of the Bedford Historical Society from 1994 to 1997. Much of his involvement in the town was centered on the Old Burial Ground. According to the Bedford Historical Society, Slechta helped secure grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to repair and restore broken gravestones and tombs. He also was the guide for Bedford’s third graders during the annual Walk of His Town. In 2010, Slechta was named Bedford’s Citizen of the Year. “He was always learning something new,” his son Marc Slechta told the Minuteman. “He really enjoyed the historic part of our town.”

Casey Rackham (COM’13)