



In Memoriam Dr. Pieter Cornelis van Voorst Vader

Deventer 28 September 1946
Groningen 8 September 2017

Dermatologist University Medical Centre Groningen
Officer of the Order of Oranje-Nassau

Our loyal colleague and friend Pieter Cornelis van Voorst Vader died in his 71st year at Groningen, Netherlands on 8th September 2017. He is best remembered in IUSTI for his work for IUSTI Europe for his work on guidelines in the management of syphilis and the cooperative skills needed that accompanied this work.

Pieter studied from 1964 to 1973 at the University of Amsterdam passing his examinations to become a medical doctor on 18th April 1973. Between 1974 and 1978 he was an assistant dermatologist in the hospital of the Free University of Amsterdam. He then trained in further post graduate education at centres of excellence ,dermatology in Stanford University Palo Alto, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Temple University in Philadelphia, National Cancer Institute in Washington and in the dermatology clinic in the University of Munich. Returning to his homeland he worked in the old VD clinic in Amsterdam in Groenburgwal as well as peripheral dermatology clinics around Amsterdam.

From 1st. October 1980 he began what was to be his life's work as Chef de Policlinique and dermatologist at the academic medical centre at Groningen where he was known to generations of medical students as an icon in dermatology as, "Professor". To be venerated by medical students is a great and happy honour for any teaching hospital doctor. In 1985-6 he took part on courses on leprosy in Karigiri, India an interest of Netherlands dermatology from its colonial days. Later work included studies on cutaneous oncology: basal cell naevus syndrome, xeroderma pigmentosum epidermodysplasia verruciformis, immune surveillance and retinoid treatment. Pieter was known as an excellent and exacting hard working leader and teacher to all the dermatologists at the centre in Groningen and helped its transformation to the international centre of excellence that it is to-day.

Syphilis increased in Europe in the 1990s. Pieter had produced guidelines on its management in the Netherlands in 1997. It was natural that he was to be one of the leaders in the cooperative field for its management in the guidelines for the treatment of syphilis in Europe developed by IUSTI

Europe after its Congress in Mykonos in October 2004. I well remember the exacting professional interactions that Pieter demanded in such a work. For some time he had lengthy telephone conversations with me usually on Sunday mornings on the minutiae involved. But his influence was great eventually being taken up into the Russian Guidelines in cooperation with our colleague Mikhail Gomberg. I had the honour to be asked in 2010 to be asked to make a citation on his behalf for the order of Oranje- Nassau and then later on 1st September 2011 with Mikhail Gomberg in the audience to give a presentation on the history of IUSTI at the Festschrift for Pieter in Groningen. It was marvellous to meet his wife Cécile , his mother and his family after the celebration. We remember them in our thoughts.

I last met Pieter during the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology (EADV) Congress in Amsterdam in October 2014. We shared a journey on the Metro and after a long tête-à-tête together. Later I heard the news of the diagnosis of cancer of the pancreas . We all knew the prognosis. As we grow older realisation comes of the brevity and joys of life. His family in the announcement for his funeral headed it ; “ Herr es ist Zeit, der Sommer war sehr gross” (Rilke).

Michael Waugh, President IUSTI 1995-1999, Leeds, United Kingdom.

I am grateful to Prof. Marcel Jonkman for letting me have a copy of his obituary for Dr Pieter van Voorst Vader and any apologies I might have made in translation.