



**Dr. Jan Muller**  
**Photograph Ruth van Crevel, 1972**

### IN MEMORIAM Dr. J. MULLER

At the age of 61, Jan Muller died on 5 October 1983, after a very short illness which only some weeks earlier had been detected. His rapid decline but also his courage during the last few weeks, have made a deep impression on all who have witnessed them.

Jan Muller was born on 15 October 1921 at Rotterdam. His secondary training was with a College of Tropical Agriculture at Deventer, the Netherlands, but the outbreak of World War II prevented his departure for the tropics. Instead he entered in 1941 the service of the botanical department of the Research Division that was responsible for scientific research in the reclaimed Zuiderzee polders. He took part in the botanical and stratigraphical analysis of peat deposits in the Noordoostpolder, under supervision of Professor F. Florschütz. From 1943 to 1946 he worked at one of the agricultural institutes at Wageningen (Instituut voor Rassenonderzoek van Landbouwgewassen), where he participated in the description of cultivars. However, the experience in the Noordoostpolder had obviously converted him to palynology and when after the war he left for the tropics, it was not in agriculture but in palynology. He worked with Shell, applying palynology to oil exploration, first in Venezuela (1946–1958), then in Borneo (1958–1964), finally at the Central Palynological Laboratory at Rijswijk, the Netherlands (1964–1967). During that period the results of his research were mostly laid down in internal, confidential reports and did not reach the international scientific forum. In Borneo, however, he also had the opportunity to do research not directly related to oil exploration and this made him known in botanical circles.

Professor Van Steenis, who had corresponded with Jan while the latter was in Borneo and who had given him advice and help, managed to have him appointed to the Rijksherbarium staff in 1967. With our institute he worked mainly in two fields. In the first place he dedicated himself to systematic palynology and so added a valuable aspect to the systematic research of tropical Asian Angiosperms, a major project of the Rijksherbarium. He published papers on Sonneratiaceae, Ochnaceae, Lecythidaceae, Lythraceae, Crypteroniaceae, Dipterocarpaceae and contributed short summaries of pollen morphology in several treatments of other families in Flora Malesiana. On the family Sapindaceae he worked for many years in close collaboration with Dr. P.W. Leenhouts and one of his last manuscripts was on *Harpullia* of that family. It will be published in the next issue of Blumea.

The other field in which he remained active, was palaeopalynology. He never lost his interest in fossil pollen as a tool in historical plant geography and evolutionary botany. This led him to publish his much-cited review of fossil Angiosperm pollen,

first in the *Biological Review* of 1970, an updated version in the *Botanical Review* of 1981.

He also never lost interest in the application of palynology for stratigraphical purposes. He retained relations with many stratigraphic (oil) palynologists and often assisted them in their work, although he did not do research in the field himself after he had left the service of Shell.

Jan Muller was well-known in the world of palynology and among all with an interest in Angiosperm phylogeny, through his correspondence with colleagues, his functions in international organizations and of course through his important papers, either published or delivered at congresses. As his son said at the cremation service, his room at the Rijksherbarium was a centre of connexions with many people widely scattered over the world. Although of a very modest inclination, a bit shy even, in that way he had an influence going far outside Leiden. His impact on palynology has been large and the honorary doctorate, bestowed on him in 1979 by the University of Amsterdam, was well-deserved. In the staff of our institute he was one of the internationally outstanding members. This is also apparent from the fact that volume 46 of the series *Benchmark Papers in Geology* (1977) was dedicated “to that most talented palynologist, Jan Muller”. Three of his papers were reprinted in this collection of 19 ‘key papers’.

Jan Muller was a good and well-liked colleague, helpful and friendly. We all miss him very much indeed. This is not only true for his colleagues at the Rijksherbarium but for many others, as witnessed by the many letters of concern we received after the sad news had spread.

C. Kalkman

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