



In memoriam Emma Elizabeth van Nieuwkoop (1933–2022)

P. Baas¹

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Emma (Emmy) van Nieuwkoop passed away at her home in Oegstgeest on 12 January 2022 aged 88. With her death we lose a devoted member of the extended families of the Flora Malesiana community, the staff of the former Rijksherbarium/Hortus botanicus of Leiden University, and the membership of the International Association of Wood Anatomists.

Born in Oegstgeest as the 4th child in a family of four daughters and one son, Emmy attended elementary school and a vocational school, and later acquired additional diplomas in evening classes, even of the Mulo – a type of extended middle school, with very high marks. She doubtlessly would have made a good academic, but opportunities for women were poor in the forties. Following secretarial jobs with a local publisher in Leiden and for work on a medical dictionary with a medical practitioner, she was encouraged by her elder sister Janny, who worked at the Rijksherbarium, to apply for a vacancy of 'schrijfster' (the old term for typist) with the General Editor of the then still young Flora Malesiana (FM) Foundation, Professor Dr. C.G.G.J. van Steenis. At the time the FM Foundation was co-financed by the Netherlands Research Council (ZWO). From August 1957 until 1972 Emmy worked in the Van Steenis home in Oegstgeest, often in close cooperation with Mrs. van Steenis-Kruseman, on the extensive bibliographies of Malesian plant families, while she also typed all Flora Malesiana manuscripts and indexes, and produced the initially cyclostyled FM Bulletins and immensely useful FM Identification Lists of completed families. Each morning, Professor van Steenis would leave Emmy's workloads in his study, before driving in his Volkswagen Beetle to the Rijksherbarium for his daily work. In 1962 the entire Flora Malesiana staff was transferred from ZWO to Leiden University, by which time Emmy, as all university staff, formally became a civil servant. She continued her work in the isolation of Van Steenis' home at the Marelaan in Oegstgeest, but in 1972 the year of Van Steenis' retirement she moved to the Rijksherbarium, then housed at the Schelpenkade, where she shared an office with the chain-smoking emeritus professor. Jan Muller (the famous palynologist, 1922–1983) and I were direct neighbours, and we welcomed Emmy with a small bouquet of flowers. For most Herbarium staff she had been known only as the invisible assistant of Van Steenis, who was so good at typing and proof-reading that authors could lean back lazily for her to do the work. That invisibility suited Emmy's modest nature. In 1977 a new challenge presented itself. The Office of the International Association of Wood Anatomists (IAWA) moved

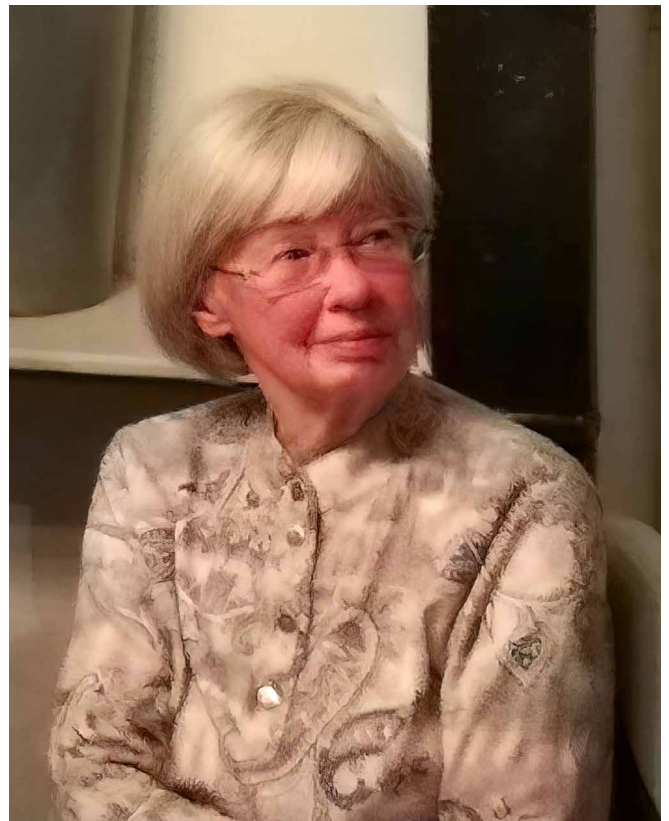


Fig. 1 Emmy van Nieuwkoop at an IAWA dinner party in her honour in 2019. Photo Frederic Lens.

from Syracuse, New York, to Leiden, and its quarterly periodical, the IAWA Bulletin, had to be produced in-house in the Rijksherbarium, the new host institution. I asked Emmy to help with the type-setting and desk-editing in her spare time, and she accepted the challenge. These were early days for in-house publishing. Leiden University possessed one so-called composer-typewriter employing magnetic cards to store texts. Emmy was allowed to use this monstrous machine one evening per week in the main university office. The results were so nice that the then Director Professor Kalkman decided to gradually move most of the expensively outsourced publications of the Rijksherbarium, notably Flora Malesiana, and the journals *Blumea*, *Persoonia*, and *Gorteria* to in-house publishing. As a result the Rijksherbarium became its own publisher, and could offer its products at much lower price than before. Emmy desk-edited the lion's share of these publications, and continued to

¹ Naturalis Biodiversity Center, PO Box 9517, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands; e-mail: pieter.baas@naturalis.nl.

use her spare time to produce nicely laid-out PhD theses for Rijksherbarium students, the IAWA Journal, the Bulletins for Friends of the Hortus botanicus, and even concert programmes of the biannual Flora Concerts in the Leiden Hortus, and of a befriended choral society in The Hague. From 1977 until her retirement in 1998 she developed text and lay-out editing into a fine art and expertly followed the rapid technical developments in Apple Computers and lay-out software such as Adobe InDesign®.

After her retirement she continued her voluntary work for IAWA, and also acted as very effective membership secretary and financial administrator for its c. 600 members. In that last role she made numerous friends, not least because she gave maximum personal service and helped many members who experienced problems with international money transfer, or who were just temporarily short of cash. In 2019, 86 years old and in her last year as desk editor she produced the Jubilee Volume 40 of the IAWA Journal of 882 pages, including three beautifully executed special issues on wood formation, fossil woods and cell wall ultrastructure. She only retired very reluctantly. Her great services to the IAWA were recognised in 2005 when the IAWA Council elected her as Honorary Member. A well-deserved honour which was awarded during the IAWA Social Hour at the XVII International Botanical Congress in Vienna.

As a single and independent woman, Emmy found great satisfaction in her work. She had a passionate love for classical music, especially Mozart operas, and she greatly enjoyed annual ski holidays in Bavaria. Sadly enough these hobbies could give her little pleasure in later life, because of her increasing deafness, and the fact that she had survived all wintersport friends. Emmy was a true workaholic and perfectionist, but all her work was truly a labour of love. We will miss her very much.

Eponymy

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