

In memoriam Kees Vellenga

The Dutch Society of Radiology – Historical Section



After a short illness, the board member of the History Section of the Dutch Society for Radiology passed away on 19 January in Almelo (The Netherlands). **Kees Vellenga**, Cornelis Johannes Lieuwe Riemer Vellenga in full, grew up as the son of a radiologist. His father, Lieuwe Riemer Vellenga, was a radiologist in Rotterdam (Bethesda hospital and Havenziekenhuis). Kees studied medicine in Leiden, just like his father, and there he also did his specialisation as a radiologist with van Ronnen, van Voorthuisen and Manoliu (1973-1977). In 1978 he started working as a radiologist in the Prinses Irene Hospital in Almelo. Besides radiology, he also developed an interest in nuclear medicine, which led to his doctoral research in the field of Paget's disease, which he investigated with bone scintigraphy. On November 24, 1982 he received his doctorate in Leiden from Prof. Dr. O.L.M. Bijvoet and with the help of co-supervisor Dr. E.K.J. Pauwels with the thesis "Bone scintigraphy in Paget's disease (osteitis deformans)".

During his studies Kees already met his future wife; Jolien Kaptein. They married in 1969. Their hobbies, which were in line with a family tradition, also gave them a strong bond because both were crazy about horse riding. Kees even calls it his second job in his autobiography. It was in dressage, including training the horses, cross-country and show jumping and later, from 1980, in judging dressage competitions. Highlights were: Dutch champion in 1968, dressage rider of the year in 1969, his participation in the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and the European Championships in Copenhagen in 1974. In 2003, he was also elected winner of the sports medic by Medisch Contact. Apart from equestrian sports, skating (Elfstedentocht 1985 & 1986, Elfmerentocht 1997) and off-piste skiing were also popular hobbies. With Jolien, taking cruises was a favourite pastime.

In Almelo, Kees experienced the growth of hospital (Prinses Irene Hospital, Streekziekenhuis Almelo, Twenteborg Hospital, Ziekenhuisgroep Twente) and department between 1978 and 2012. He published a separate book about this². He focused on conventional radiology, ultrasound, CT, non-invasive vascular diagnostics and until 1999 nuclear medicine. He was also an acting trainer from 1992 to 1998 and then a trainer. At that time, it was a B course, which became an A course in 2001. As far as publications are concerned, he mainly focused on gastroenterological radiology and nuclear medicine. As a result, in the mid-1980s he was a board member of the Dutch Association for Nuclear Medicine. Besides radiology itself, he also paid much attention to the history of radiology. When the museum committee (from 1978 to 13 November 1995) led by Cees Kan stopped its activities, Kees founded the Historical Committee and served as its chairman until 2016. In that period, he actively contributed to the realisation of the jubilee book on the occasion of 100 years Dutch Society of Radiology. Kees joined the editorial board of Memorad and since 2000 he has authored or contributed to about 100 articles.

He was also secretary of the Dutch Society of Radiology from 1990 to 1992. Other functions were vice-chairman (1988-1990) and chairman (1990-1991) of the medical staff in Almelo, member of the NVvR committee '100 years of X-rays' (1992-1995) and the centenary committee of the NVvR (1994- 2000), member of the Concilium Radiologicum (1994-2000) and co-ordinator of the radiology department in Almelo (1995-1998). He also ensured that a liber amicorum was realised for Jap Rethmeier and Kick Bendel; in 2003 and 2010 respectively. In September 2009 Kees founded the Historical Society during the 15th "Radiologendagen" in Amsterdam (RAI). This Society was not to last long because Kees organised everything himself, but since 17 June 2021 it has got a worthy successor in the Section History of the NVvR. In 2013, Kees was appointed Knight of the Order of Orange-Nassau. For many years, he worked at the radiology departments of Curaçao (Antilles), Paramaribo and Nickerie (Surinam). Kees was an open-hearted human being. He flourished in the Almelo gentlemen's club, enjoyed his cruises and the trips organised by the Historical Committee and was practically the only one of our age group who still frequented the "Radiologendagen". After the death of his wife Jolien (30-1-2015) Kees lacked the drive to give his all for more than one hundred percent because the loneliness made it impossible for him to do so. We thank Kees for his enormous commitment to our association over the past decades. He leaves behind a son, a daughter and five grandchildren.