

Obituary



Louis van der Heide 1933–2014

Louis van der Heide, 80, died on May 5, 2014 in Ridgewood, NJ. Louis was born on August 2, 1933 in Aerdenhout, The Netherlands. After finishing high school he could not decide on a career path and his parents, both chemists, had him working on a farm for 1 yr shoveling a lot of manure. This year was important for his professional career because it led to his decision to become a veterinarian. He received his D.V.M. degree in 1958 from the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. After 1 yr in a private practice, he started his career in poultry medicine by joining the Provincial Animal Health Service in Boxtel, The Netherlands, where he worked for 1 yr. The second important professional decision Louis made was to move to Curacao, in the Caribbean, where he worked from 1960 to 1965 as the Deputy Chief of Veterinary Services in The Netherlands Antilles. Afterwards he returned to his interest in avian diseases at the Diagnostic Disease Laboratory at the University of Maine in Orono (1965–1966 and from 1968–1971). In-between he conducted research in The Netherlands and at Penn State University, United States. In 1970 Louis received his Ph.D. in veterinary virology from his alma mater, the University of Utrecht, for his thesis on “The Fluorescent Antibody Technique in the Diagnosis of Avian Encephalomyelitis.” Louis and his family moved to Columbia, CT in 1971, when he accepted the position of Associate Professor in the Department of Pathobiology at the University of Connecticut. He served as Chair of the Department of Pathobiology until his retirement in 1994.

Louis was well-known for his research on avian diseases, especially on reovirus-induced arthritis-tenosynovitis. He isolated the S1133 strain of reovirus and successfully developed this strain into an inactivated vaccine. Subsequently, a temperature-sensitive live vaccine was generated after the virus was first passaged 235 times in embryonating chicken eggs followed by 65 passages in chicken embryo fibroblasts (CEF) at 32 C and 35 passages in CEF at 37 C. His vaccine is still being used worldwide. In addition to his research, Louis was highly respected as a diagnostician of avian diseases.

Teaching was an important aspect of his professional career, and he was highly respected by his students as an excellent and fair teacher. He did not like hearing professors brag about how many students they had flunked. Louis saw that as a teaching failure and, if the class average

was below a B, he concluded the professor could not teach. In addition to teaching regular courses at the University, he also organized several continuing education courses attended by poultry veterinarians and technicians from many countries.

Louis served for a long period as secretary of the Northeastern Conference of Avian Diseases and he was heavily involved in the AAAP. He served as Vice President (1988–1989) and President (1989–1990) of the AAAP and on the Board of Directors representing the North-Eastern Region (1981–1988 and 1993–1997). After his retirement from the University he served as editor of *Avian Diseases* from 1994–2003, introducing many changes which resulted in a significant shortening of the time between submission and publication. As editor he always went the extra mile, working closely with the reviewers when there were differing opinions about acceptance of a manuscript.

Louis grew up during the Second World War in the occupied Netherlands, which had a profound effect on him. When his family was forced to relocate to a house in Haarlem as a consequence of the occupation, he met a 5-yr-old girl named Ingrid Klaje at the primary school. After the war Ingrid studied in several European countries. Returning from her final study year abroad in the 1950s she was met by a young, towering man with a bouquet of flowers at the railroad station. Shortly afterwards Ingrid and Louis were married in 1959. Ingrid always encouraged Louis to follow his career wherever it took the family. Their marriage was blessed with 4 children— Marjolein, Ilje, Mike, and Pieter; 11 grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. In his free time Louis loved to play the piano and listen to classical music while pretending to be the conductor. His children remember him as a patient father with a good sense of humor, always willing to explain how things worked. He was also a humble man, introducing his children to people from all parts of society, teaching them that all people are equal. Louis was predeceased by Ingrid in 2010.

One of his former students and later colleague defined Louis as follows: “The dictionary defines ‘great’ in many ways: large in size, superior, admirable, strong, gifted, and distinguished. Louis was a great man using any definition. His knowledge as a poultry veterinarian was superior, he was a paragon of integrity, and had world-wide recognition in his field.” He will be sorely missed by his family and by the poultry scientific community.