**Siem Broekhuis**

April 10th, 1943 – November 10th, 2013

Siem Broekhuis was born in a two-room apartment in the south of Rotterdam, not far from the Unilever factory where his parents, Siem and Sjaan (Adriana de Ruiter), had met. Not long afterwards, the family moved to a bit larger home on Fuchsia Street where Siem's brothers, Jan and Jos, were born.  
His childhood memories were mostly happy, though these were hard times in postwar Rotterdam with rationing and a serious housing shortage. They had lots of relatives close by, a playground across the street and summer vacations with their grandparents at a woodsy campground in Soestduinen.  
After primary school Siem became the very first child from his school to go on to a college preparatory school, the Van Oldebarneveldt HBS. There he joined the korfball club, Unicum, where he made friends for life. His parents were very proud when he enrolled in the Technological University of Delft to study chemistry, but his studies were interrupted when he entered the military service in 1962.  
Meanwhile he had met his future wife, Jeanette, during a summer job as a steward aboard the SS Nieuw Amsterdam. Jeanette Nehls was an American student on her way to Germany where she was to spend her junior year at the University of Heidelberg. In September Siem hitchhiked to Heidelberg to visit her and during the Christmas break she took a long, slow train ride to Holland, where she met Siem's family and started her long exploration of Holland. Before Jeanette returned to America to complete her English degree at Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio, the couple were engaged. In order to become financially secure with a new wife, Siem signed on to a four-year program in the military and became an officer in the Dutch Cavalry.

In the summer of 1965 Siem and Jeanette were married in Ohio, at Trinity United Church of Christ in Elliston where she had grown up and her parents still lived. The church was packed because everyone wanted to see this "Dauntless Dutchman" as he was called in the Toledo Blade, who had wooed and won an Ohio girl. Siem stole the show in his gala dress uniform complete with long sword. Back in the Netherlands, they settled in Soestdijk near Amersfoort where Siem trained cavalry recruits and Jeanette worked as an English translator for an engineering company.  
Siem was able to continue his studies during his military service, and when he returned to civilian life in 1967 the couple moved to an apartment in Vlaardingen which was within bicycling distance of Delft University. In 1970 he graduated as a chemical engineer and got a job at the Esso refinery near Rotterdam. Meanwhile, two sons had been born, Rob in 1968 and Frits in 1970. To make the family complete they added a dog, Timmy, who was rescued from the Humane Society. They went to live in Heinenoord, a small rural village near Rotterdam.   
  
Siem did well at Esso, and after just a year was sent on assignment to the Exxon Research and Engineering Department in New Jersey where the family spent more than a year. Back in Heinenoord the house seemed very small after the large American homes they had lived in, so Siem bought a plot of land in the larger village of Rhoon and hired an architect to design a new house and contractors to build it.   
Rhoon turned out to be an ideal place to live. Siem and Jeanette joined the tennis club, and Siem was soon active in many organizations, including the school board, the labor party and environmental groups. In 1980 they moved to the Achterdijk, a dike on the edge of the village where Siem had much more space for his beloved gardening. Besides tennis he always loved cycling; the family even went on vacations by bicycle.  
  
At the Esso refinery Siem held several senior management positions and served as a leader in the introduction and use of computers, but became increasingly interested in starting a business of his own. By this time Jeanette had been teaching English for several years at the Rotterdam teacher training college, and had published lesson materials for secondary school English, so it was a logical step to combine education with computers by starting a business in computer training for end users. This was Broekhuis Training, which began in 1985 as a tiny operation with one classroom in the center of Rotterdam, but rapidly expanded into a nationally known institute with training facilities in 12 cities throughout the Netherlands.  
These were exciting years of hard work that were rewarded with success. Siem saw the company's sponsorship of the Dutch Chess Championships, three years in a row, as a culmination of his business success. After 15 years, however, the heady growth of the computer training market was over and Siem and Jeanette sold the business and retired early, pleased to have turned over the business to new owners as the market was slowing and changing.  
  
It was just after he retired that his family began to notice that Siem no longer had the clarity of mind which had always characterized him. Eventually he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, which after a long decline has now resulted in his death.  
  
Siem was proud of his sons, who both completed engineering degrees at Delft and found their way to careers doing work that they love. After completing his PhD studies in chemical engineering at UC Berkeley, Rob married an American girl, Amy Keyser, from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They have three children, Max, Ben and Lily, and live in Allentown, PA. Frits lived first in Rotterdam and now in Amersfoort and married Claire Smoorenburg; they have two daughters, Septime and Mireille. Siem dearly loved his grandchildren but they, like the rest of us, have lost him much too soon.

Since May 2011 Siem has lived in the Meeuwenhof nursing home in Hoogvliet, a few kilometers from Rhoon, where he was given skilled and loving care. He continued to greet visitors and staff with an intense but friendly gaze, and attention was often rewarded with a broad smile. And he continued to enjoy cycling, but now on the duobike at the Meeuwenhof.