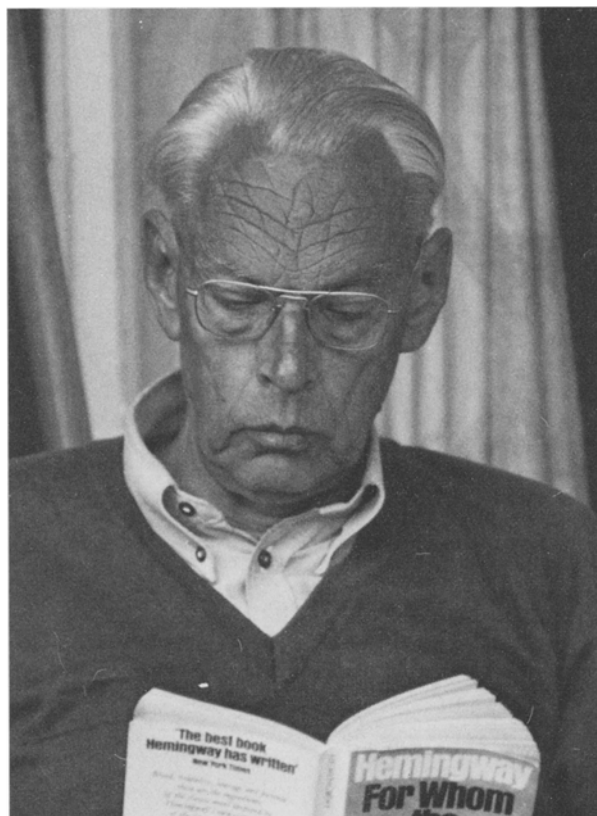


## Dr A. C. van der Linden 1916–1982



This is the last issue of *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek* to carry, on the inside front cover, the name of its desk-editor, Dr A. C. van der Linden. In the evening of the day on which he had been preparing this issue's galley-proofs for mailing to the authors, he suddenly died of a heart-attack.

When, at the age of 60, he retired from his position as a team-leader in the Microbiology Section at the Royal Dutch Shell Laboratory, Amsterdam, he was only too happy to find work for his active spirit by becoming desk-editor of *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek*. Desk-editor is really too simple a word to describe the many duties and tasks he took up. He was soon determining the presentation of the Journal, being editor, desk-editor, proof-reader and production manager, all at the same time. Thus, he made possible the continued publication of the

comparatively low-budgeted journal *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek* is and, with the other members of the Editorial Board, succeeded in reanimating the Journal after a period of some decline in the mid-seventies. Extremely dependable, he required only very few words to become convinced about the priorities of the Journal. Selflessly, he devoted his energy to *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek*, concerning himself with necessity rather than personal pride. He was certainly a man to whom the proverb 'An honest man's word is his bond' applied.

In his scientific career he was equally successful, becoming a well-known authority in several fields. After having returned with his parents from Java (the former Dutch East Indies), where he was borne at Pekalongan, he attended secondary school at Hilversum, and studied chemistry at the University of Amsterdam. After having been assistant to Prof. Dr Wibaut for some time, he moved to the Laboratory of Physiological Chemistry under the world-famous Prof. Dr B. C. P. Jansen who, with Donath, was the first to obtain a vitamin, namely aneurin, in a pure, crystalline form. Shortly after the war, Arie van der Linden started his work on the microbiological estimation of amino acids, and on the amino acid composition of human haemoglobin in relation to age which was to lead to his doctor's degree in 1949. After having completed his doctoral thesis, he continued working in this field for some years, under the employment of the Foundation 'Netherlands Institute of Public Nutrition', of which Professor Jansen was the stimulating tutor. Then, in 1955 he took a position at the Microbiology Section of the Royal Dutch Shell Laboratory, Amsterdam. Here he was able to give full scope to his scientific capabilities in his much-cited work on the microbial oxidative breakdown of hydrocarbons, to which the list of his papers bears ample testimony. This work, made possible by novel methods of chromatographic separation and analysis, has had a tremendous impact on oil microbiology. In particular, his discovery of the epoxidative breakdown of  $\alpha$ -olefins by *Pseudomonas* species aroused considerable interest in industry. This discovery provided the basic knowledge to allow other researchers to genetically construct an oil-degrading *Pseudomonas oleovorans* strain, now valued for its possibilities in the stereospecific synthesis of chiral organic compounds. Besides, he made significant contributions to present knowledge regarding the problem of oil pollution of marine environments.

Given his scientific interest, together with his friendly and modest character, it is not astonishing to hear that Arie van der Linden was a welcome guest at scientific institutes at home and abroad. Shortly before his death, he happened to find a press-cutting, recording a visit he paid to Professor Payne. With joy and gladness, but also a trace of melancholy, Arie recalled the event, in which he was welcomed as a 'distinguished visitor' by the same person who now, as the convener of the Seminar on Denitrification, opens this, Arie's last, issue of *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek*.

The Board of the Foundation *Antonie van Leeuwenhoek* owes Dr van der Linden a great debt of gratitude for his ardour in the fulfilling of his task as

a desk-editor; the Editorial Board has lost a modest, honest and true friend and colleague, who did his utmost for the benefit of the Journal.

To quote Professor Payne: 'All who met him recall him in friendship and respect'.

A. Fuchs  
Editor-in-chief

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