

Patrick Hanlo

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On a Saturday in April 2008, Patrick Hanlo died in a fatal sailing accident. His sudden and tragic death shocked everyone. His wife Els and their three young sons, Martijn, Diederik and Floris, were left behind with an innumerable loss. In a dignified requiem mass his family, his numerous friends and colleagues remembered Patrick and shared their mourn. Everyone recognized Patrick in the way he was

commemorated, and everyone realized that we had lost a dear friend.

Patrick lived his life intensively. His philosophy was “never a dull moment” and “carpe diem quam minimum credula postero.” His professional career as a paediatric neurosurgeon illustrates this attitude. Being a son of a physician, Patrick wanted to become a doctor as well. Patrick went to Utrecht to study medicines, and he decided to specialize in Neurology. Soon, he became involved in paediatric neurology, and he started a research project on non-invasive intra-cranial pressure monitoring in infantile hydrocephalus. In 1995, he defended his thesis on this subject obtaining his Ph.D. degree at the University of Utrecht. Before that time, Patrick had become fascinated with neurosurgery and especially paediatric neurosurgery, and he had started his neurosurgical residency in 1993 in the department of neurosurgery of the University hospital of Utrecht headed by Professor Tulleken. In 1998, Patrick finished his neurosurgical residency successfully, and he was assigned to further develop paediatric neurosurgery in the Wilhelmina Children Hospital. In those early years, Patrick worked together with his colleague, mentor and close friend Professor Peter Vandertop. Patrick developed himself not only as a knowledgeable clinician but also as a very well-respected doctor by his patients. Patrick initiated several research projects mostly on hydrocephalus, and he contributed to numerous papers in the literature. The department of paediatric neurosurgery in Utrecht has evaluated in collaboration with the department of paediatric neurology, into a reference centre for complicated paediatric hydrocephalus based on Patrick’s clinical and scientific efforts. In recent years, Patrick and his colleague Sen Han have continued to develop the neurosurgical cure and care for children in their hospital. Simultaneously, Patrick started to build an extensive professional network. He went to the paediatric neurosurgical department of Necker in Paris for

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a visiting internship, and he became acquainted well with the members of the neurosurgical staff. Patrick became the first author of the European Orbis Sigma valve trial published in the Journal of Neurosurgery. Patrick participated actively in the European Society for Paediatric Neurosurgery (ESPN) postgraduate course, and together with Pim van Ouwerkerk, he organized one of the ESPN courses on a ship, floating along the Dutch waterways. Patrick also attended most of both the ESPN and International Society for Paediatric Neurosurgery conferences, as he had meant to be in Montreux as well.

Patrick's sudden death will have a profound impact on the Dutch paediatric neurosurgical community. We lost one of the initiators of the Dutch section of paediatric neurosurgery, a very well-respected colleague, but above all, a true friend. We shall always commemorate Patrick the way he lived "never a dull moment." Sharing with Patrick the passion for paediatric neurosurgery, he will live on in the work for our patients through our hands, in our minds and especially in our hearts.

This obituary is written on behalf of the Dutch Paediatric Neurosurgeons.