

*“Slapen doe je zo ”*

## **IN MEMORIAM HILBERT KAMPHUISEN**

Al de Weerd

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Hilbert Kamphuisen, emeritus professor of Clinical Neurophysiology at the Leiden University Medical Center, passed away on March 24, 2013, at the age of eighty. From his point of view he was in particular the sleep professor and indeed, for many workers in the field of clinical sleep medicine he deserves that title. His scientific production was limited, but he was a great teacher and promotor of sleep medicine in times when this medical subspeciality was taken seriously by only a few persons in The Netherlands. His enthusiastic approach was nearly endless and ranged from fund raising for scientific work to down-to-earth work in the media, either radio, television or the press. Most famous was his trip as the company physician during a Belgian expedition to the North pole. He took that opportunity to have his sleep recorded during this months lasting trip, using small tape recorders and implanted subdermal scalp wire electrodes. The recordings were of good quality, but we never saw the results of the many nights of sleep, possibly due to Hilbert's continuous and restless search for new impressions. At least, many of his friends enjoyed the beautiful film made of that expedition. Just to mention: Hilbert and head of his technical staff in Leiden, Bob Kemp, went even further than our planet and were intensely involved in the Russian Mir space program.

During the sleep conference in Jerusalem in 1988 plans were made by the attending Dutch sleep researchers to found a sleep society in The Netherlands. Although at that moment still an upcoming worker in the field, Hilbert took the initiative and made the first practical steps for founding the NSWO, together with the other clinically oriented sleep researcher in The Netherlands, Guus Declerck. The decision was made on the evening of November 25, 1989; the legal foundation on June 7, the next year. Guus did the formal part, Hilbert used his strong promotional power (and often neglected the rules made by Guus...) in these months and continued to do so up to his retirement as founding chairman in 1994. Together with colleagues with interest in basic aspects of animal or human sleep, both made the NSWO a strong and fruitful society within a short time. At the moment Hilbert's successor, Ton Coenen, took over the chair of the society, the NSWO was already a success.

Hilbert was always optimistic and remained so even in difficult times. The ultimate proof came in 1991 when it became clear that there would be no clinical sleep center in the -at that time- new Leiden University hospital. He called his colleagues in Clinical Neurophysiology, Jonkman and de Weerd, in the Westeinde Hospital in The Hague, and said bluntly that he and Bob Kemp wanted to start a joint venture with The Hague. With the formal help and nearly "unlimited grant" offered by Henk Schippers and Rob Bakker, at that time directors of the hospital in The Hague, a sleep center was founded and within four years grew out to one of the leading sleep facilities in The Netherlands. This was really a nice time for the steadily growing staff in these years and became the base of further clinical and scientific work.

After these initial years Hilbert just copied "old soldiers" and gradually faded away from daily practice. He stopped altogether at the end of 1998 with a big party and a Liber

Amicorum. Both party and book were exactly as he was himself: show what you can and so called limits are there to be crossed.

After his retirement Hilbert sometimes came to see what happened at the center of which he was co-founder. Unfortunately, his wife Ammy started suffering from what proved to be a long lasting illness. Again one of the strong points of Hilbert came about: just like in his working years he spent most of his time with his beloved ones, but now at home. Finally, there were more important things than sleep or neurophysiology, just like it should be.



Prof. Dr. Hilbert A.C. Kamphuisen (1931-2013)