



Kees Vrieze

February 1, 1996 marked the 25th anniversary of the appointment of Professor Kees Vrieze to the Chair of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Amsterdam.

In order to adequately celebrate this event and to focus on his scientific activities throughout the years, his colleagues at the Department of Inorganic Chemistry organized a two-day symposium, "Current Developments in Transition Metal Chemistry", in Amsterdam on November 23 and 24, 1995. On this occasion, 18 colleagues from all over the world, most of them having known Kees for more than 25 years, contributed a lecture. The chemistry presented in the contributions focused on recent developments in the research areas of each lecturer and was in most cases closely connected to Kees Vrieze's scientific work and interests. Subjects were, among others, chemistry of metal–metal bonded compounds, metal clusters, dynamic behaviour of transition metal compounds, migration and insertion reactions, homogeneous catalysis, ligand design, NMR, photochemistry and photophysics of transition metal compounds. These lectures, together with the interwoven juicy anecdotes, ensured an unforgettable event for Kees Vrieze as well as for the audience of about 100 friends, colleagues, (ex-)Ph.D. students and visitors.

To add to the celebration and to commemorate this event, it was envisaged to publish a special issue of *Coordination Chemistry Reviews*, the result of which is now in your hands. The papers deal with topics included in or related to the lectures delivered during the symposium. Also, several colleagues who did not attend the symposium agreed to write an expert review on this occasion. The organizers thank them all for their efforts. We feel that the collected contributions add valuable reference material to the subjects of coordination and organometallic chemistry and are certainly of interest to those active in the field.

After his studies with Professor Van Arkel in Leiden, where he graduated "cum laude" in 1962, Kees Vrieze took up a position as researcher at the Koninklijke/Shell Laboratories in Amsterdam (KSLA), where he was soon given the opportunity to obtain his Ph.D. with Professor Sir R.S. Nyholm at UCL London working on metal–metal bonded systems. Returning to Shell in 1964 he worked on 9-allyl-metal compounds and later became the personal assistant to Lord Rothschild, meanwhile supervising his research at KSLA. In 1970 he was called to the chair of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Amsterdam, which position he took up from February 1971. Since then, he has been teaching organometallic and coordination chemistry as well as NMR spectroscopy and did research in a number of areas with, up to now, 30 Ph.D. students and numerous undergraduates.

His main areas of research have been the coordination and activation of unsaturated molecules at transition metal centres, activation and formation of C–C, C–N

and C–H bonds, application of NMR in studies of fluxional systems and design of di-, tri- and polydentate ligands. More recently his interests have shifted towards mechanistic studies in homogeneously catalysed processes, especially insertion reactions of carbon monoxide and unsaturated carbon compounds into palladium–carbon bonds.

In 1984 he was appointed a member of the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences, which institution he served as General Secretary from 1990–1996. He participated in and was chairman of a large number of committees and advisory boards as well as vice-chairman of SON, the Dutch research council for chemistry. He is and has been a member of the board of several international journals and was chairman of the 8th International Symposium on Homogeneous Catalysis held in Amsterdam in 1992.

Kees Vrieze is a very remarkable person and an outstanding chemist who is well known for his many scientific and administrative contributions, in the Netherlands as well as on an international level. For his scientific and societal merits he received on April 30, 1996 a knighthood in the order of the Dutch Lion from Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

His enthusiasm for chemistry, but also his directness in approaching persons and in dealing with professional tasks, continue to motivate and influence all who know him and work with him.

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