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Obituary Willem van Zeist: 12 March 1924 – 7 October 2016

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Abstract

In this obituary the scientific career of Willem van Zeist is reviewed.

On 7 October 2016 Willem (Wim) van Zeist, Professor Emeritus at the University of Groningen, passed away at the age of 92 (Fig. 1). He was a pioneer in Quaternary palaeobotany, palynology, and archaeobotany, and was one of the leading Dutch scientists of his generation in these fields. He was elected a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences in 1983. He was born on 12 March 1924 in Apeldoorn. During Wim's last years his physical and mental capacities gradually decreased.

1. Early years and education

Willem van Zeist's father was a criminal investigator with the police in Apeldoorn. Wim attended high school from 1936. His interest in botany developed at an early age when he became a member of the well-known organization Nederlandse Jeugdbond voor Natuur (NJJN) for studying flora and fauna and practicing nature conservation. Plant sociology became his special interest. The last years of World War II caused a delay in his education, as was the

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