

# People

## Profile: David van Dorp



David van Dorp, son of a Dutch spice merchant and recipient of the 1983 Supelco AOCS Research Award, radiates vitality, warmth and curiosity.

At the AOCS meeting during May in Chicago, where he received his award, van Dorp was seen almost everywhere. At the Chicago Art Institute reception he was an animated observer of the Mauritshuis exhibit of 17th century Dutch paintings from his native Holland. In the meeting hotel he could be seen coming and going for his daily swim at the indoor pool. At social and technical events, his 6-foot plus stature made him readily recognizable.

In brief, if you were at the meeting, you had a fairly good chance of meeting van Dorp and, if you did, you probably had a delightful conversation.

It may have been about chess, which van Dorp learned from his father and at which he was a tournament player until about 15 years ago when he gave up tournament competition because it required too much time.

Your conversation may have been about stamp collecting, for van Dorp's father-in-law started him on that hobby. Perhaps van Dorp described how he used a laboratory spectrophotometer to check the color on some 1852 Netherlands stamps to determine whether they were all printed with the same dye.

If your main interest is lipid research, you had a chance to talk with a researcher who many believe deserves the Nobel Prize for his work on prostaglandins. Sune Bergstrom, the recipient of the AOCS lipid research award, did receive the Nobel Prize this past year for prostaglandin research. Ralph Holman, who introduced van

Dorp at the plenary acceptance address ceremony, described van Dorp and Bergstrom's work on polyunsaturated fatty acids as the precursors of prostaglandins as "one of the classic races in scientific research." The two men, working independently, reached the same conclusions and the results were published simultaneously in the same journal.

Van Dorp says his parents were of farmer stock, with his father taking a job as a grocery clerk at age 13 after six years of formal schooling. At age 17, van Dorp's father founded his own spice business—a firm, since expanded to related products, that is still operated by one of van Dorp's older brothers.

"There were nine children, and I was one of the youngest," van Dorp said. "So I had the opportunity to go to school because the older ones were working in the business.

"I cannot tell you why I chose chemistry in college, except that I had always received good marks in the exact sciences."

He received his doctorate in 1941, with Europe embroiled in war. He was hired by a pharmaceutical firm to do research, work that kept him from compulsory work in Germany. In 1942, he was married to Arnolda Wijnanda Vuystingh. They had met when he was a graduate student and she was a medical student sent to his lab to learn a specialized technique. "She is from a patrician family in Utrecht," van Dorp says, a family in which he was full-heartedly received. They have one daughter, Lieuwkje, a lawyer who is married to a geologist. The van Dorps have two grandchild-

dren, age 6 and 2—"two wonderful boys," van Dorp says. During an aside at a photography session, he mentioned quietly, "You know, at my age (68), awards are nice, but grandchildren are most important."

Van Dorp states flatly: "I fired myself from the pharmaceutical job," and explains it was because he felt a proposed restructuring would have undermined his authority. "You know, if you let them walk on you once, they will continue. So I quit."

He quit without any job offers in hand, but one soon came from Unilever. At Vlaardingen, van Dorp enjoyed his work, his surroundings and his colleagues. He still did not enjoy efficiency specialists who one time began propounding organizational theories and techniques to him. He dismissed them from his office. "It never bothered me if someone was reading a newspaper in the laboratory," he said. "It would have bothered me if someone had put away a newspaper once he saw me coming."

Van Dorp and his wife still live in Vlaardingen, a relatively small town outside the larger and more sophisticated Rotterdam. "It was closer to the lab to live in Vlaardingen," van Dorp says.

A skiing accident long ago is responsible for the trouble with his leg, which requires van Dorp to use a cane. It also means he must travel first class when flying to assure sufficient leg room.

His selection for the AOCS award came as a surprise, he says, for he has been retired three years. So he had to work again for his acceptance talk. On the morning of its delivery he was

nervous. "If I am not nervous, I don't give a good talk," he says. After rehearsing and checking his slides, van Dorp finally stretched out on his bed for a brief rest before the 1 p.m. talk.

His talk, "My Years in Lipid Research" describes his research career

and points out some unsolved puzzles for current researchers to work on (see page 1645 of this issue of *JAACS*.)

Later, at the conclusion of his talk, after he received a standing ovation, van Dorp asked, "Did it go well? Did

they like it?"

After the AOCS meeting he planned to visit with former colleagues throughout the United States and then back to The Netherlands, home, and the grandchildren.

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## Appointments

Cargill has appointed four assistant vice-presidents in its domestic soybean processing division. They are: **Robert Drake**, Memphis, Tennessee, manager of the southern region; **John March**, Norfolk, Virginia, manager of the southeastern region; **Paul Mulhollem**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, manager of the western region; and **Alan Tennesen**, Minneapolis, manager of the central region. . . . **Jack Howell** has been appointed managing director of technical affairs for the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. . . . Wenger Manufacturing in Sabetha, Kansas, has named **Elmer Osterhaus** as its director of service and extrusion processes and **Galen Rokey** as manager of the Wenger pilot plant and research center. . . . AOCS member **David B. Min** has been elected president of the North American Chapter of the Korean Society of Food Science and Technology. Dr. Min is with the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at Ohio State University. Other officers for 1983-84 include **Sam Hwi Lee** of Castle and Cooke Co. as secretary general, and **Ki Soon Rhee** of Texas A&M, **Myong Ja Cho** of Ralston Purina and **Chang Rae Lee** of Stauffer Chemical Co. as directors.

## Theodore Beck

AOCS has been informed of the March 16, 1983, death of Theodore Beck of Louisville, Kentucky, former president of the Votator Division of Chemetron Corporation. Mr. Beck had been an active participant in AOCS activities while with Votator, which he left in 1976. He was 58.