

PERSONAL REMEMBRANCES OF MINZE STUIVER

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The trees lost a great friend when Minze Stuiver passed away peacefully at age 91 at home with his two daughters, Ingrid and Yolande, beside him. Minze touched the lives of many colleagues professionally and personally during his long career studying carbon and oxygen isotopes as tracers of time and the environment. Minze stood tall and dignified and with integrity, just like those stately, woody (and icy) historians he admired and learned from. He expertly extracted their isotopic recordings of our world's history with a precision borne from his life as a self-disciplined, meticulous scientist and attentive, thoughtful individual. Many of us were mentored and cared for by Minze on both a professional and personal level.



Ingrid, Minze, and Yolande Stuiver.

My remembrances are those of a friend who knew Minze for nearly 40 years, first as an official graduate student in the 1980s and then, for many more years, as a lifelong admirer. My wife and I spent many evenings out with Minze throughout those 40 years, always introduced with gentle humor as the “youngsters” (into our 60s and 70s!) to the strangers that Minze quickly charmed. One of many evenings to stand out is the one in which Minze, professorial and outgoing as always, approached and spoke of his love of bagpipes (from his visits to Belfast) to the kilt-attired restaurant group seated at the next table. As we left the

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establishment, one of those young men had preceded us to retrieve his bagpipe from his car and cheerily and respectfully serenaded us on a cold night in a dark parking lot.

Minze worked hard throughout his life, setting an example for students and staff with his beyond-the-norm dedication to working long hours in our research lab. Yet, he gave me perhaps the best career advice after he returned to work from serious cardiac surgery in his 50s. He told me that, while on the operating table, he had not once thought of his many hours spent at the lab. Instead, he rued the birthdays of his daughters he had missed during his professional travels and emphasized the importance of one's family. Minze could appear crusty when presenting consequential factual particulars to peers, but he was also tearfully hard on himself at times for his exacting nature as well.

Minze's life was filled with many incredible adventures as well as severe hardships as chronicled in his *Radiocarbon* journal anniversary narrative entitled "A Random Walk Through Time" (Stuiver 2009) and in his more extended and unpublished "Tales of War and Science: A Memoir by Minze Stuiver, Ph.D." completed in 2016. He survived famine-pervaded years growing up in occupied Netherlands during the second World War, and those experiences clearly contributed to his strong constitution and steadfastness throughout his life. His remembrances of those times are retold in scrupulously accurate detail as only could be presented by the reliable and candid voice of a principled scientist. During those teen years in harsh conditions, Minze had a wild side too, and listening to him recall some of his risky war escapades (much to the regret of his parents) added a certain nuanced understanding of who he was.

Minze's research versatility is well-documented. His doctoral work in nuclear physics at the University of Groningen on the "Biophysics of the sense of smell" was followed by work in a multitude of research areas, including the development of a high-precision radiocarbon calibration curve, the investigation of solar cycles and solar-induced climate change, determination of deep water residence times in the world ocean, modeling of global carbon transfers (including global deforestation rates) and detailing high-latitude temperature (climate) changes recorded over tens of thousands of years in ice cores. Minze's foundational background in physics had far-reaching interdisciplinary applications such that he was a member of the geology department at University of Washington, a cherished accomplishment despite "never having taken an actual course in rocks." Minze's versatility derived from an expansive inquisitiveness that remained throughout his retirement. As must be the case for many academics, he was a voracious reader even in "retirement," including a scrutiny of many journals, not to mention his daily cover-to-cover review of the *New York Times*.

Much more on Minze's life, career and professional accolades can be found in his 2005 Penrose Medal citation by Don Easterbrook (2005), his 1998 retirement tribute (*Radiocarbon* 1998), and his Wikipedia entry by Paula Reimer (2021).

It was a privilege to be in the company of a distinguished and grounded person with a wise and lucid voice, waggish humor, and a gracious and generous nature. Many of his lab colleagues and staff treasure those convivial evening dinners over the decades when Minze and his wife, Anneke (who preceded him in death in 2010), entertained us as extended family members.

Minze expressed the truism that there is no escape from “time disease,” as he identified it, but those who knew him had hoped that his strong will would keep him with us for many more years. I am one of many who are in disbelief that he is gone, and I greatly miss him as a mentor and a dear friend.

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