

A word of welcome by the funeral service worker Harriëtte from 'Archeron Uitvaarten'

Welcome.

On behalf of Susanne I welcome you all here at our farewell to Frits Baartman.
Susanne is very glad you could come.

It is strange to see each other here after so long under these circumstances, knowing this will be our last time together with Frits.

Frits.

You were known to us all and today you bring us together.

People that were along with you for the ride. People that are here to say goodbye.

Our goodbyes to Frits will be slightly different from what you might be used to.
Susanne wanted this to be an informal gathering, a living room environment as we call it.
A room that represents comfort and warmth, so those here today, can say their goodbyes in a comfortable and relaxed way.

We will be presented with a speech from Susanne.

Frits wasn't a man of many words and wanted above all everyone to be together.

This way you will be able reminisce and personally chat to Susanne and family and friends.

Around 14:30pm you will be able to pay your respects to Frits and personally escort him to his hearse.

The hearse will leave for the crematorium where the cremation will take place in silence.

I now hand over to Susanne.

Susanne's speech - a tribute to Frits Baartman

Dearest people,

I am glad you have all made it here to say farewell to my father Frits Baartman.
Thank you all very much.

Thanks to the funeral center Acheron for organizing this.
And thank you, Harriëtte.
And thank you as well, for the coffee and cake there will be served later.

As you all know, over a week ago on Saturday Frits had passed away. He suffered a heart attack while driving on his way home after a birthday party and hit a tree.

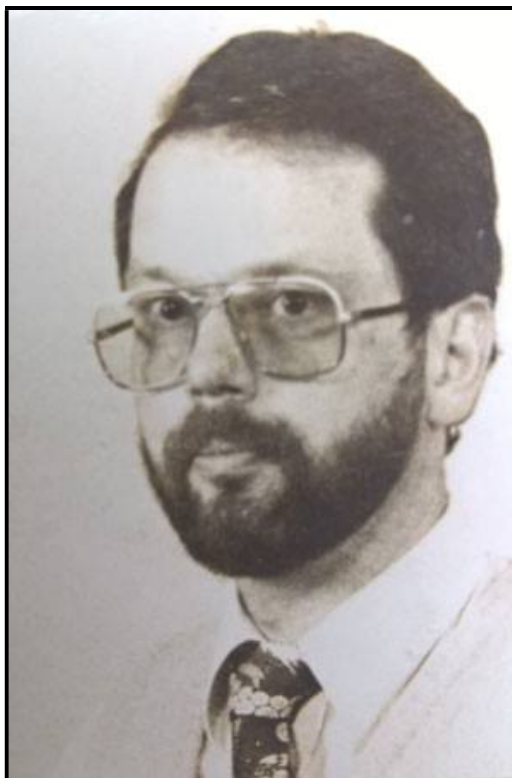
I visited the crash site last Monday to see the car wreck. The car had folded entirely around the tree rendering it a total loss.
Last Saturday I went to the mortuary. It was incredible seeing my father laying there with nothing more than a band aid on his forehead and some minor scratching.

But first things first.

I have planned for us to go to the restaurant Queen Bee after our farewells, here in the city centre.
There we can, for those interested, have a last drink (or cup of tea or Chocomel) to Frits.
The first drink is payed for.

There will be video recordings of which a montage will be made. Which will later be sent to those who couldn't be here, such as our family abroad.

There will be a guestbook.
I would greatly appreciate everyone leaving their name and maybe a few kind words, a greeting, a memory or goodbye to Frits.



My father's passing was a surprise to me and very sudden. The police came at my door in the middle of the night. I looked out of the bedroom window to see who in heavens name was waking me at this time of the night. The image of two officers standing in front of my door has since been etched into my memory.

As most of you would know, Frits and I haven't communicated a lot in the past 20 years.

This is why I was very surprised to see him finally accept my friend request on Facebook a little while back.

I now know that aunt Nora suggested him to do this. He did well, listening to his older sister!

A lot has been happening the past few days. I have had contact with a lot of people to give everyone a chance to say goodbye to my father.

We are now here, together, with a group of beautiful people.

Daddy, I know you're not here to see this right now. It is clear now, there are plenty of people that care about you and have memories of you.

A special welcome to all people who've known you Dad. I'll start with your brothers and sisters:

Nora / Nico

+ kids Debby / Vanja / Kirsten

Carel / Corrie

+ kids Marjolein (best of wishes from Vietnam) / Peter

+ kids Astrid (sailing around the world) / Didier

Rob / Evelyne

Caroline / Ingrid, daughters of **Hetty**

Frans / Gertie who couldn't be here

+ kids Bas / Sigrít / Amber

Barbara / Dieter who also couldn't be here

Joop and the entire family from America. You will be sent the video recording and this transcript. That way you can be here with us in heart.

Hello America !!

Frits's life partner:

Annemarie

Annemarie's sister in law Corrie

+ kids Bram / Dorthie

Friends from the scouting club:

Louis

Friends from the shortbow club:

Masco / Carina

Paul

Family from the bloodline of Frits' mother **Ans Pennaat**, who helped you with your genealogical research, who also couldn't be here.

Frits' niece Joke

Frits' nephew Eelke and wife Truus

Best friends:

Frans / Anna / Maks / Kacper. They have known Frits for more than 16 years.

My mother Monica, who said:

Your father has given me a beautiful daughter

This is a compliment for me, but also a compliment for you Mom. And for you Dad!

My partner Cor. Thanks for all the love and support. I love you.

My good friend John, who just happens to be my ex-husband! Thank you for making this recording for the family abroad and those who couldn't be here.

As I had mentioned earlier I have not seen my father for years.
This makes it difficult to describe him.

From the stories I heard in the last couple of days I heard a lot of things I recognize in him:

- withdrawn
- mild and kind
- atypical
- introverted.

Frits was a character of his own.

I have the feeling he struggled a lot. Struggled with life itself. Struggled with himself. Struggled with the people around him. Struggled with social constructs and contacts.

And yet he really enjoyed the company of people, as long as it was one on one or in smaller groups without being the centre of attention.

I heard this story from the family:

They were at a gathering with a large group of people eating at the family table. Frits was on a chair a little bit away from the group with his plate on his lap. He was happy that way.

He was a really large man. He couldn't easily be overlooked.
And yet it seemed as if he was trying to hide himself.

And you know what, I recognize this.

My son David, 20 years old, who isn't here with us today, has a type of autism. He has the same traits as Frits. He prefers to avoid company and isn't entirely comfortable making contact with people he doesn't know very well. He prefers to sit behind his computer for hours on end.
Could this be in the genes?

I will be asking David if he can translate this text from Dutch to English. For the family in America. He's very good at that, he's very good at English.

I suppose I recognize some of that autism in myself.
Listen to this:

1946:

Dad, you were born on November 12th, 1946.

It was a Tuesday.

It was a chilly autumn day, 7 degrees. (44 Fahrenheit)

There was no sun that day. No rain.

The Netherlands had 9 million inhabitants.

2016:

You passed away on June 18th, 2016.

It was a Saturday.

It was a cold summer day, 16 degrees. (60 Fahrenheit)

A bit of sun, a bit of rain.

The Netherlands now has 17 million inhabitants.

Your zodiac is Scorpio.

You almost made it to Father's Day.

You would have lived to be 70 years old this year.

You have lived for 25,420 days.

And if you had never shaved your beard, it could have been 8.5 meters long. (28 feet)

By right a true Baartman!

Although I haven't seen my father for years, I have many happy memories of him from when I was a little girl.

During our vacations to Switzerland you handed me your love for mountains, Dad.

And your creativity:

- we build a kite the size of an adult. It was sooo big!
- you really enjoyed cooking. You refined my smell and taste. I now enjoy cooking a lot, and think of you when I do.
- I can still remember you sitting at the large wooden table, with your soldering iron and electrical condensers and resistors. I can still smell the soldering tin when I think about it.
- and the giant yellow tent that you designed and stitched by yourself, and the fireplace that you build all by yourself.

You enjoyed playing with words.

You had thought up a name for the national Serbian and Czech drink Slivovitsj, which had 42% alcohol.

You called it "**slingerfiets**". (swerving bike)

You thought that fit way better and was much easier to remember. *Slingerfiets*.

At the breakfast table we had a lot of fun butchering words.

We turned a *mandje brood* (basket of bread) into a *brandje mood* (brasket of bed).

And a *plakje kaas* (a slice of cheese) became a *kakje plaas* (a chise of slease).

This was obviously hilarious to a little girl.

Oh and a *klontje boter* (nub of butter) became a *kontje bloter* (bub of nutter).

We had a blast, you and I.

Dearest people. I'll wrap it up.

Just one more thing, Dad.

When I came to visit you in the mortuary you laid there very calmly.

You seemed at peace.

I put my hand on your chest and said to you:

Dad, you look at peace.

I think you deserve that peace. You have struggled your entire life.
You don't have to anymore.

It's okay now.

Brothers Carel and Rob, and sister Nora put the lid on the casket, closing the casket.

We waved the hearse goodbye.

After saying farewell we had a drink to Frits at the Queen Bee restaurant.

There I made a toast to Frits:

I raise the glass to my father.

Frits is now with aunt Hetty. They'll know how to have a party up
there.

So down here we will too.

Cheers!