

A group of people, including men and women in formal attire, are standing in a line and clapping. They are in a room with large windows and high ceilings. The text is overlaid on the image.

COUNCIL ON ANIMAL AFFAIRS

IN MEMORIAM OF FRAUKE OHL

‘AUTHORITATIVE, UNIFYING, GRANTING  
SPACE TO BOTH REASON AND EMOTION’

## Foreword

On 28 January 2016 Frauke Ohl, professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University and Chair of the Council on Animal Affairs, passed away after a brief illness. Her death comes as a blow to both institutions and to her many colleagues and contacts.

A memorial service in memory of Frauke was held in the town of Austerlitz, Province of Utrecht, on 5 February 2016. This event was attended by a large number of people and, together with speakers from all areas of Frauke's life, it reflected the huge amount of affection and esteem that she had created in the course of her life.

This joint publication by the Council on Animal Affairs and the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine contains not only a journalistic account of her life but also a full reproduction of the orations held on that day. So that Frauke will never be forgotten.



*Marc Schakenraad, Secretary of the  
Council on Animal Affairs*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Schakenraad', written in a cursive style.

*Wouter Dhert, Dean of the Faculty of  
Veterinary Medicine*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wouter Dhert', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath.

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Universiteit Utrecht



RAAD VOOR DIERENAANGELEGENHEDEN

# In Memoriam for Frauke Ohl

## ‘Authoritative, unifying, granting space to both reason and emotion’

*“Intellectually authoritative, she was an engaging personality who was always seeking the common ground in a field where debate is often fierce. And she achieved this with pleasure, charm and a sense of humour.” It was Friday, 5 February 2016 when these evocative words were spoken at the memorial service for Frauke Ohl, professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University and Chair of the Council on Animal Affairs. She had passed away a week earlier, on 28 January. More than a hundred and fifty people from her professional field gathered in Beaufort House in Austerlitz, seated close together in the hall while some also stood in the foyer, and they heard such sentiments more than once as they listened to the speeches.*

In her work she granted space to facts, images and emotions, recalled Henri Kool, one of the speakers and someone who, as a director at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, knew Frauke Ohl in various capacities. He felt she did right to seek this space because all these factors play a role in the field that became her core area of activity, that of animal welfare. Which certainly doesn't mean it was an easy job, because feelings can sometimes run high in the societal debate on this theme. And in this aspect too one senses admiration for her, reflected in many forms during the day.

Frauke - in fact everyone attending the event on this day called her by her first name, just as they did during her life - Frauke was fascinated by the relationship between

Frauke Ohl was born in Germany in 1966. She studied biology in Kiel and wrote her PhD thesis at the German Primate Centre (DPZ) in Göttingen. In 2004 she was appointed Professor of Animal Welfare and Laboratory Animal Science at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University, and two years later head of the Department of Animals in Science and Society at the university. In 2008 she became a member of the Council on Animal Affairs, where she assumed the post of Chair in 2012. At the time of her passing Ohl was a member and Deputy Chair of the National Committee for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Covenant for Unanaesthetised Ritual Slaughter.

Frauke Ohl died on 28 January 2016.

emotions and behaviour, as her colleague professor Ludo Hellebrekers said at the end of the service. In all facets of this relationship, “in all kinds of species, between all kinds of people”. We ourselves, the people in her environment, would have been rewarding study material for her in the last week, he then adds. “Her illness, but above all the way she herself dealt with it, triggered a



Michael Ohl with family

tsunami of emotions and accompanying behaviour among many of those who were very close to her.”

### **Staying at the wheel**

On 19 October last year Frauke sent an e-mail to her colleagues and contacts: “I have been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer that has already metastasised throughout my body.” This was a great shock to all, but the way Frauke dealt with it was in line with her character. “Although I only knew her for a short time, we were

in regular contact in the period following that message and she went through the necessary and difficult treatments with great courage,” says Wouter Dhert, Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Up to two weeks before her death Frauke stuck to her own resolution: “Of course, for as long as possible, I aim to keep on doing what has always been important to me and what makes me who I am.” And then she e-mailed Dhert that things were really getting hard, but she would let him know when she could telephone again. Just as she would be

described so often on this day: “Always helpful to others, never asking attention for herself.” But also constantly ensuring that she stayed at the wheel regarding her own life, and in this case regarding her death, too. In the weeks before her passing she clearly expressed “how she wanted to see things arranged with regard to her dying, with regard to today and the coming period as well.” Frauke’s older brother Michael, who visited his sister while she had been admitted to the hospital for a short stay, recounted in a warm and personal speech that this seemed to be the right place at this time “because then she wouldn’t feel responsible for my well-being, as would be the case in her own four walls.”

This was greeted with a sense of recognition in the fully occupied hall of Beaufort House, whose Gothic windows are reminiscent of its former role as church, while the interior betrays its current function as a theatre auditorium set amidst natural surroundings. The hall furnishings are restrained, with plenty of wood and chairs with wicker coverings. Plenty of daylight entered through the windows on that day, and we could see the woody surroundings which, once spring arrived, would soon resonate to the sound of whispering leaves again – Frauke’s favourite sound, as her colleague Saskia Arndt would tell us.

## **Vision and wisdom**

A strong woman, that’s how some described Frauke Ohl. “A strong and often hard-seeming person,” is how Michael described her, for instance, but immediately continued: “Above all she was hard to herself, as was clearly reflected in the way she treated her own body and in the illnesses and ailments she suffered.” Michael said: “If she were to hear me talking now, she would certainly hope I won’t get too sentimental.” Frauke’s strength was also expressed in her leadership. “Never angry, but certainly clear, asking critical questions, sometimes strict,” is how Henri

Kool described her. Her staff member Pim Rooijmans of the Department of Animals in Science and Society described Frauke’s leadership with respect to her colleagues: “Our figurehead, the captain of the ship, our boss and a beacon for all.” And Saskia Arndt praised her management abilities: “We are proud to be the department that you shaped,” she said. “You put together the team with vision and wisdom,” and here too Frauke’s awareness of emotional aspects is cited: “You selected people not only on the basis of knowledge, but also with consideration of social and emotional skills.” Her interest in social aspects had already been mentioned by Michael Ohl when he described the special relationship between a brother and sister who both followed careers in animal sciences, whereby he was the studious reader and Frauke the one with the superior social competencies and skills.

## **The strength to reach a consensus**

Another post in which her leadership bore fruit was Frauke’s chairship of the Council on Animal Affairs (RDA). She had already been a member for several years when she was appointed to this post with strong support from both within and outside the council, said Ludo Hellebrekers. She was particularly good at filling the post of chair, he said. “She was able to unify people and standpoints.” This was a notable achievement in a field where opinions can often diverge so strongly, but it is even more special when you consider that Frauke herself usually had a clear and well-founded opinion of her own. In a consultation she usually adopted a more reticent position, leaning back, recounted Hellebrekers, almost as if she were concealing herself. “But at a certain moment she joined the discussion with a question or comment and then you could see how the focus of attention slowly shifted to her until finally all eyes rested expectantly on

her.” On other occasions Frauke could interrupt the discussion at a strategic moment with the words “Full stop!”, by which she meant that further discussion would not produce any new results. Herman Koëter, Chair of the National Committee for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes (NCad), described this as a sense of realism. She was a true leader, he said: “She didn’t seek a consensus, no, she had the strength to create one.”

## **Transparency and consistency**

During the day it became clear that authority such as that developed by Frauke Ohl is based not only on social skills and leadership qualities, and also that Frauke would never have been satisfied with this alone. Some called her “intellectually authoritative”, “inspiring at the expertise level” and “with impressive accomplishments”. And, as underlined by Ludo Hellebrekers, she enhanced the



substantive discussions in the Council on Animal Affairs. It was also in this council that she achieved a ‘next level’ in the way that societal issues relating to animal health and animal welfare are dealt with. She originated the principle that was first clearly formulated in the opinion document ‘Duty of Care, Naturally’ by the Council: animals are beings with feelings, and people have the moral responsibility to give consideration in their actions to their welfare, irrespective of the animal species or circumstances. This is one thing. And secondly, according to her former colleague and fellow council member: “She wanted transparency and consistency in the recommendations of the Council. In order to achieve this, under her leadership an assessment framework was developed.” This framework played and continues to play a key role in the recommendations by the Council, and has become a symbol of the consistency that Frauke Ohl strived to achieve.

### **Active but not quite activist**

Another striking thing is that the same woman who showed such strong involvement – “active but not quite activist”, some said of her – and such clear opinions also worked with commitment to ensure that the Council did not attempt to adopt standpoints or to take policy decisions. Frauke was good at connecting and uniting, as many speakers said. She was able to bring together parties on both sides of the spectrum in order to arrive at recommendations that were more route descriptions than standpoints. Policy should involve the ultimate choice for an approach or solution, as Henri Kool summarised it. And then there was her personal charm. Charm and a sense of humour: these were mentioned by various speakers, and from the expressions of the listeners in the hall you could see that they too recalled this. Herman Koëter remembered how in his contacts with Frauke he

quickly had the feeling that he was a special friend. “Later I realised that almost everyone had this feeling,” he adds. Her colleague Pim Rooijmans said that he “and probably many among us” were secretly also a little in love with Frauke, “a strong and warm woman who was full of ideals. She was a terrific woman.”

### **Close by**

Indeed, the power of Frauke as “a great connector”, as Ludo Hellebrekers put it, continued to resonate that day. The speeches were interspersed by music from the 1970s and 80s which could easily be associated with Frauke’s independent character and slightly alternative perspective. Her PhD project took a little longer than normal because she had to take a few month’s rest after a motorcycle accident, recounted her brother Michael. That fits the picture, too. On the modest podium of the small theatre auditorium, next to the piano and a wooden rostrum, stood a portrait of the deceased. Frauke was still close by. It felt, said Ludo Hellebrekers, “as if she could walk in any moment.” In the first row sat her life partner Achim, mentioned with warmth by various speakers. Saskia Arndt called him “the loving, big, strong man whom she could lean on,” and after all that had been said, it seemed almost like a revelation that a person of Frauke’s calibre also needed someone like that. Arndt also mentioned Frauke’s concerns for the well-being of her parents. “They let us become who we are and were,” her brother Michael said about them earlier, “and in the final weeks they made an almost superhuman effort to be with and support their daughter.” And so it was good to know that they and Achim drew consolation from a gathering that was rich in warmth, appreciation, sympathy and even awe, as was the case here, and that was concluded by a standing ovation for their daughter’s life.



## Ein lebendiges Leben

Besides the sorrow of saying goodbye, this memorial service above all expressed gratitude for Frauke's achievements. "We miss our figurehead, but will continue with extra inspiration on the path commenced under her leadership," says a declaration by the Council on Animal Affairs. Frauke lived her life to the fullest, said Ludo Hellebrekers. And in the words of Michael, she had "ein lebendiges Leben" [a lively life], even if it ended much too early. For him it is a consolation, he said, that he was close to her for an important part of his life. And although their relationships with Frauke may have been different, many of those present could identify with this sentiment.

Martijn de Groot

## Speeches at the memorial service for Frauke Ohl, 5 February 2016



### Michael Ohl

Brother of Frauke

*Speech originally delivered in German*

Dear parents, dear Achim, dear family, dear colleagues  
and friends of Frauke, dear guests,

Dear friends and colleagues,

During the preparations for this memorial service we  
decided that I will talk to you today in German. I am well  
aware that not everyone will understand everything or

even anything, but in view of Frauke's and my family it  
seems that German is the most appropriate choice.  
I thank you for your understanding.

This is the second time that I am holding a short speech  
in Utrecht, or at least close to Utrecht. The first time was  
almost exactly ten years ago, on the occasion of Frauke's  
inaugural lecture, when she came to Utrecht to work and  
live here. Of course, the occasion then was much more  
joyful than today's. Nonetheless it is now, just as then, a  
great pleasure for me to speak in honour of my sister and  
to publicly express the feelings of affection and pride  
I hold for her.

Frauke and I ultimately both became biologists. As a  
result, it is too often assumed that we thus strongly resemble  
each other. But that is only true in part. Frauke and I,  
as brother and sister, conform quite well to Frank J.  
Sulloway's observations on the rivalry between brothers  
and sisters. To give one example, we are both fairly  
conscientious and ambitious. However, it is said of first-borns  
such as myself that they are also conformist, conventional  
and defensive. Second children, such as my younger  
sister, are by contrast the rebels of the family. They  
resist more, are more creative and tend more quickly  
to cast doubt on principles.

These differences are also clearly reflected in the way we  
ultimately practiced biology. I wanted to become a

biologist as early as the age of six. I was very interested in biology and threw myself in a slightly autistic manner into the world of insects, spiders and nature books. With extreme concentration and full of dedication. I was a fairly satisfied little guy, but also a terribly boring geek. In the meantime I had, in my childish seriousness, so strongly staked out the field of biology in our family that it didn't enter my sister's head that biology might be something for her as well.

Even at a young age, Frauke experimented within a completely different spectrum, namely that of social interactions. It is generally known that girls develop faster than boys, and since we were only fifteen months apart, Frauke quickly caught up with me once puberty set in. And in many different areas. Suddenly she was no longer my little sister, but did things that seemed very grown up to me and which I had never dared to dream about. Things like smoking, which she never gave up, or her first boyfriend. I envied Frauke for her social abilities and adroitness. And for her rebelliousness. She was always looking for injustices that needed righting. Especially in this warrior role Frauke was a puzzle to me which I regarded from something of a distance, with pleasure and at the same time with jealous dismay. I preferred to leave the role of Robin Hood to my sister.

As well-behaved first-born, my career as a biologist took a fairly ordered course. After my *Zivildienst* [German compulsory military service] I began my studies in Kiel. Frauke wasn't so sure what she wanted to do after her final school exams and first made what was possibly a slightly too idealistic foray into medicine, before quickly realising that this certainly wasn't what she had imagined. At that moment she began considering biology, and then Frauke did indeed decide to study the subject. First in

Bielefeld, for reasons of love. And after gaining her Vordiplom [first year of studies] she moved to the University of Kiel. This turned out in retrospect to be an important step. Not so much because I was already studying there and thus we attended many subjects and lectures together, but chiefly because there she met two important people who would have a major influence on her further life. Firstly there was her later husband Achim, and secondly Dr Dorit Feddersen-Petersen, who headed the research group *Verhaltensbiologie an Wild- und Hauscaniden* [Behavioural Biology of Wild and Tame Canines] at the *Institut für Haustierkunde*. Behavioural biology in higher mammals, if I may express it as a systemically minded person, appealed strongly to Frauke and the direction she began under Dorit Feddersen-Petersen remained the basis for her further career up to the last.

Thanks to Dorit Feddersen-Petersen and my own focus on entomological systematics and biophilosophy, our academic paths steadily diverged. And that wasn't a bad thing, either. We were both well aware that our studies offered each of us the unique opportunity to do what really interested and fascinated us. In Frauke's case this was increasingly the practical, hands-on aspects. Frauke was happiest when she could combine academic research on large animals with the design, adaptation and application of experiments. In contrast, I preferred to immerse myself in the books and research collections of dead insects. Frauke and I never tired of teasing each other about this. She portrayed me as an academic in an ivory tower, which was pretty much true, and in turn I accused her of taking the academic path of least resistance, which was absolutely not true at all. Her collaboration with Dorit Feddersen-Petersen also resulted in the book *Ausdrucksverhalten beim Hund* [Expressive Behaviour in Dogs], which they co-authored.

After graduating I moved to Göttingen to do my PhD, and in the first months there I saw an announcement on the university notice board that there was a vacancy for a PhD student at the German Primate Centre. I immediately told Frauke about this and she successfully applied for the post. And so once again I found myself at the same university as my little sister. However, now we seldom saw each other. We both devoted ourselves fully to our PhD projects and we each had our own social circle. Moreover, Frauke and Achim didn't live in Göttingen but more distantly, or so it felt, in a rural area of Lower Saxony. Three years later I moved with my diploma and my first child under my arm to the *Museum für Naturkunde* in Berlin, where I still work today.

Frauke needed a little longer to gain her doctorate because after suffering a motorbike accident she decided to take a break for a few months. Once she had her academic title she moved first to Munich and then departed for Utrecht.

Over the years our careers continued to diverge. We saw each other only occasionally, simply because the distance was so great. Two weeks before her death I visited Frauke in Utrecht, as a surprise and without telling her beforehand, while she was in hospital for a short time because of kidney problems. I didn't tell her beforehand because she would otherwise certainly have said 'no'. Moreover, I felt a hospital visit would actually be a good idea because then she wouldn't have to look after me, as she certainly would have wished to within her own four walls. We spent a really good day together. Actually, we talked almost exclusively about her approaching end. And we talked once more about our relationship and the different ways we had shaped our lives, which maybe meant that we missed important things about and in each other's lives.

It was good to be able to assure each other that this wasn't the case. That our bond was so deep and strong that we simply didn't need to visit each other regularly. That last visit is certainly one of the most valuable memories of my sister in the past period.

Frauke was a strong woman who could sometimes seem hard. Above all, she was hard to herself, as was clearly reflected in the way she treated her own body and in the illnesses and ailments she suffered. If she were to hear me talking now she would certainly hope, now that I'm getting to the end of my speech, that I won't get too sentimental and that I don't start citing historical sources or finish with wise sayings. She would also certainly fear that I'd start quoting some hard-to-follow philosopher, but today I'll leave all that out.

With one small exception. Theo Eckmann, with whom I have been good friends for years and who besides his work in special education has also written poems, was able to capture exactly what should be said here today in a brief aphorism in a collection of poems called *Alltagslaute* [Everyday Sounds].

<i>Nicht umsonst</i>	[Not in vain]
<i>Der Tod ist kein</i>	[Death is not]
<i>vergeblicher Preis</i>	[a futile price]
<i>für ein lebendiges Leben.</i>	[for a well-lived life.]

Frauke lived a lively life, even though it ended much too soon. For me that is a great consolation, just as it makes me realise that a large part of my life has been closely linked to hers. And will also remain so, even though she is no longer with us.

This close bond would never have existed without my parents, who let us become who we are and were. In the final weeks my parents made an almost superhuman effort to be with and support their daughter. In this time of need the family came together: my parents, myself, my wife and my children, and together we supported Frauke as well as we could. And this too gives us consolation.

But of course it doesn't change the fact that Frauke has gone from us. Irrevocably and for ever. She will live on in us, in our memories, but also in me, my parents and my children, and finally, through her work, in her friends and colleagues. That's why we have all come together here, and that's why I am grateful to everyone who has made this service possible.

And for all those who were unable to follow my speech so clearly, I thank you for your patience and, above all, for the fact that you have come here today to commemorate my sister, who has gone from us much too soon after a highly productive and happy life. She will always live on in our memories and our hearts, and I am incredibly grateful for everything I have been able to share with her. Thank you.



**Henri Kool**

Director of Animal Supply Chains and Animal Welfare, Ministry of Economic Affairs, on behalf of the Minister of Economic Affairs, Henk Kamp, and the Minister for Agriculture, Martijn van Dam

Dear family, ladies and gentlemen,  
On behalf of the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister for Agriculture, and on behalf of all colleagues at the ministry who worked together with Frauke Ohl, I would like to say a few words. Professor Frauke Ohl felt like a member of the family at the ministry in The Hague. At the ministry she was not only the representative of the Council on Animal Affairs, a role she fulfilled with verve, but also held various advisory posts. Among other things, she was:

- member (and also Deputy Chair) of the National Committee for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes;

- chair of the Covenant for Unanaesthetised Ritual Slaughter Committee;
- chair of the Supervisory Committee for Animal Welfare during the outbreak of avian flu in 2014;
- member of the Committee on Animal Biotechnology; and
- among other posts also member of the Policy Advisory Committee for the Oostvaardersplassen.

In all these capacities Frauke Ohl contributed to make significant and authoritative recommendations on animal welfare and animal policy. These recommendations played, and continue to play, an important role in policy. In this work Frauke Ohl was aware as no other that the moral frameworks regarding animals, and human use of animals, are constantly undergoing change. That it is not only scientific facts that play a role, but also images, emotions and values. And this concerns animals that move freely in their natural environment (or are occasionally washed up), animals that we use as food, animals that we keep as a hobby or for company, or animals that we as a society use for scientific research. Facts, images and emotions all play a role in the debate about people and animals.

All these issues involve an important question: how do you as a society achieve a proper balance regarding your treatment of animals and regarding what is necessary and responsible in this area, and what isn't? There are often no ultimate answers to these questions, and policy decisions have to be taken in this difficult field. The challenge is not to make these decisions on quicksand, but instead on a foundation. Preferably on the most solid one possible. In the eyes of Frauke Ohl, a balanced recommendation was one that gave space to the various relevant perspectives and that clearly identified the issues to be considered. She saw this as her major task. She carried

it out conscientiously, with passion and pragmatism. The ultimate decision: that's what policy is all about. Frauke Ohl was intellectually authoritative. And she combined this with an engaging personality. She believed in dialogue. In seeking as much common ground as possible, especially for a societal issue on which debate is often fierce. Frauke had a unifying effect on both organisations and people. She granted space to both reason and emotion, and she did this in a very open and accessible manner. It wasn't about her, it was about the issue at hand. That gave her natural authority. And that's how she led discussions at the ministry. In a pleasant, friendly, charming manner, with a sense of humour. Treating others with care and respect. Inspiring at the level of expertise. Never angry, but certainly asking critical questions, sometimes strict. Pragmatic wherever possible, and if necessary also with great perseverance. This fine mix of qualities brought her and us many benefits.

On behalf of the Minister of Economic Affairs and the Minister for Agriculture, and on behalf of my colleagues, I wish to express my great appreciation and gratitude for the important role that Frauke Ohl played in her recommendations, with her talents and with her personality. With this sense of gratitude we will continue our path, applying what we have learned from her in the service of a better world for people and animals.



### **Ludo Hellebrekers**

Member of the Council on Animal Affairs, on behalf of the members and the secretariat of the Council.

Ladies and gentlemen, Achim, parents, brother, friends of Frauke, colleagues,

Frauke has died. We can still hardly grasp it. It feels as if she could walk in here any moment. We knew that her illness made it unavoidable, but it moves us deeply and the sad news came much too soon.

Up until the last she continued to focus on the work of the Council and nothing indicated she was so ill. The reports remained optimistic. She continued to give more or less direct responses and to take decisions, even if it she wasn't required to. Typical Frauke, always ready to help others, never asking attention for herself.

In 2008 Frauke was appointed as a member of the Council, and in 2012 she became chair. The Minister was looking

for an authority, a principled person and someone who would be able to transcend the various competing interests. The search didn't take long, and Frauke was appointed with strong support from both within and outside the Council. She was particularly suited to the role of chair of the Council. With clear and well-founded opinions, she succeeded in unifying people and opinions. She always sought dialogue and never wanted to have the last word, but at the substantive level she always got it. In many consultations she often first leant back, almost as if she were concealing herself. But at a certain moment she joined the discussion with a question or comment and then you could see how the focus of attention slowly shifted to her, until finally all eyes rested expectantly on her.

Frauke inspired our Council and guided it to new insights. She raised the issue of the differences between dealing with captive and non-captive animals. In the first opinion document issued under her leadership, 'Duty of Care, Naturally', it was proposed that the recognition of animals as sentient beings means that humans have the moral responsibility to consider in their actions the welfare of all animals. Irrespective of the species or context and irrespective of the question of whether humans are responsible for the animal's situation.

Our chairperson favoured an open dialogue about the place and use of animals in our society. She granted space to both reason and emotion. She was a fervent advocate of transparency and consistency in decision making. To support this process, under her leadership the Council developed an assessment framework. With her characteristic charm she strengthened the substantive discussions in the Council meetings and the Council's own initiative.

She was happy to leave office affairs to the supporting team. Her interest was quite clearly on the concrete issues. She was tireless in her clarification of arguments and she always stuck to her guns. Sometimes, if discussions began lasting too long, she would utter the words ‘full stop!’ at a strategic moment, to make clear that further discussion tended to be pointless.

Under her chairship the Council on Animal Affairs received a boost; without her the Council wouldn’t have become what it now is. We currently have a large number of opinion documents in preparation and it’s sad that she won’t see them published.

Frauke is no more, but her legacy is great. We are grateful for the soundly based Council she leaves behind and we shall continue with a sense of inspiration on the course she set. The Council on Animal Affairs wishes all of you, and especially her husband and family, much strength in dealing with this major and still difficult loss.



**Wouter Dhert**

Dean of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of Utrecht University

Last summer I talked to Frauke and told her that it would be fine for her to take more holidays. She deserved it, she had worked hard enough for it. Subsequently she was so sad that she had taken September off, full of good intentions, and then during this month had to tell me that she was having health problems. Although I knew her only a short time, in the following period we had fairly regular contact, and with great courage she underwent the difficult treatments that proved necessary after the unexpected bad news. The last message I received from her was exactly two weeks before her passing, where she wrote to me: “Wouter, for the time being I really have to confine myself to what is truly necessary, but I’ll let you know as soon as I think we can discuss a few things on the telephone. I hope that this will be possible really soon.”

What does this tell us? Optimism, the wish to work, commitment, and above all a sharp mind, even in the face of a threat to her own life.

Professor Frauke Ohl, *Frauke*, born in Germany in 1966, trained as a behavioural biologist, was the author of several books about the behaviour of dogs, and was a *scientist*. Since 2004 she was professor at our Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and a champion of animal rights in scientific and public debate. Active but, as one might say, not quite activist. A professor with a best-practice approach for letting one's scientific work have an impact on society; that's what a modern university is all about.

I won't list them all, but she was active in many socially relevant bodies, some of which are represented here today. That says a lot, and we are losing someone in the prime of her life, who achieved much and meant much. As a result, she lives on through the impact she has had up to now in a world of continual change, and in which certain special people are able to make a difference. Frauke was one such person; in her short life she already passed on so much, but it's so sad that it didn't last longer. Sad for society, for her colleagues, but above all of course for her relatives, for whom our deepest sympathies. The work is never complete, the journey to the ultimate destination is often just as important as what beckons on the horizon. For Frauke the journey was short but intensive and she experienced plenty. We will try to resume the journey, aiming for the point on the horizon set by her.

Frauke, rest in peace and thank you for everything you meant to us.



**Pim Rooijmans**

Colleague at the Department of Animals in Science and Society, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Dear Achim,

My first thought, when I heard that Frauke was incurably ill, was about you:

What about Achim! And then shivers down my spine. Dear Achim, I hardly know you. We met only a few times. One of these times was at a garden party put on by Vera and Jan. We said cheers, and tried to find out who could empty his bottle of beer the fastest, or something like that. Frauke stood next to us and said with a shake of the head: Boys...!

Shivers down my spine, then and now too, at the e-mail we received from Frauke on 19 October, telling us exactly what the situation was. The clear, apposite words.

A tremor went through the department. We all gathered in Paulien's room. With a sense of unreality and shock. In the following weeks we pulled ourselves together again and carried on with our work, always with Frauke at the back of our minds. With a heavy heart we asked Paulien now and again if there was any news.

Frauke dropped by at the department a few times. On such occasions we besieged her. Our figurehead, the captain of the ship, our boss and a beacon for all. And as some said, the anchor. Certainly something about water and boats, anyway.

Frauke was important to us and to the department. She often analysed and solved the problem with a few words, sentences, or she gave the necessary and correct instructions that enabled others to make progress. This is one of the reasons why we appreciated, and still appreciate, her so highly.

It happened so quickly, too quickly. Unreal. It seemed a strange day, that 28 January when we heard that Frauke had died during the night. The handshakes, the hugs, the squeeze of the shoulder. It was clear that we had lost someone who was of huge importance to us. The visits by the dean and the director, the moving words, also by Paulien, Saskia, Louk and Claudia. Afterwards the walk in the woods with all our colleagues. The sense of community could be seen and felt. All the warm and heartfelt reactions from people outside the department. It was heart-warming.

Dear Achim, family and colleagues,

I, and probably many among us, was secretly also a little in love with Frauke. A strong and warm woman who was full of ideals and ideas. She moved us. She was a terrific woman.

A colleague from outside the department said: "The way you talk about Frauke and her illness is special. Your emotion and sadness prompted by the illness of your boss is special. It must mean that she's very important to you." That's true, she is important to us and it will remain that way. Unfortunately Frauke was never really able to say goodbye to us, nor we to her. It all happened too fast.

I wrote this text late in the evening on the day she died. From the heart.

I wish strength to all! We will miss her. In the name of all staff of the Department of Animals in Science and Society.



**Saskia Arndt**

Colleague at the Department of Animals in Science and Society, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

*First part of the speech originally delivered in German*

Frauke, we miss you so. We miss you so much. We miss your expertise, your listening ear, your ability to inspire, your support, your strength, your dynamism, your openness, your ability to console, your humour, your constructive criticism, your passion, your friendship.

We are so proud of being the department you shaped. You put together your team with vision and wisdom. You selected people not only on the basis of their knowledge, but also with consideration of social and emotional skills. It is thanks to you that we stand here today as a powerful, stable unit.

Over the years it wasn't always plain sailing for us. You piloted us through each storm and taught us how to grow as a result. You taught us to realise the power of unity and to see each setback as a challenge. You held the compass in your hands and ensured that together we developed a vision regarding our goals. You taught us that it's worth fighting for your ideas if necessary.

You'll be proud of us, Frauke, because we're carrying on. We'll do all we can to improve the coexistence of animals and people. With more people like you, Frauke, the world would be a better place, and you were, are and will remain our shining example.

We at the Department of Animals in Science and Society were able to learn so much from you, Frauke. The only thing you didn't teach us is what it means to miss you.

Dear Achim, dear family and friends of Frauke,

It's terribly difficult to find words for something for which there are really no words. The unimaginable has happened, Frauke has gone from us. It may be a little unusual but I would like to take this opportunity to thank you. I want to thank you for sharing Frauke with us; in recent years we have probably been allowed to spend more time with her than you did. I also want to thank you for your understanding. Frauke's work was incredibly important to her and I hope that you also know how important Frauke's work was for our department, the faculty, the university, the Netherlands and yes, even for the world. How important her work was and will always be.

I myself was very lucky to have a very special bond with Frauke. In the eleven years we knew each other, we shared more than just our work. Even though Frauke always tried to keep work and private life separate, she nonetheless confided much in me.

Dear Achim, when Frauke spoke of you, she talked about that loving, big, strong man whom she could lean on, a man who was always there for her. The sparkle that I saw in her eyes at such moments betrayed that this was true love.

Dear Ohl family, your family had to deal with health problems. That was always an issue and a cause for concern for Frauke. I can assure you that she was always thinking of you. I well recall how relieved and happy she was when she was able to tell me that things were getting better. I also realised how important your family was to her on an evening when we were working much too late again, and I was trying to persuade Frauke to finish work and go home, as I was doing. She said to me: "Wait a moment, I'm just writing a quick e-mail to my mother. We arranged that I will always send her at least one line each day."

On the wall of her office there was a photo calendar with family photos. As time passed I increasingly often said "What a nice photo, I haven't seen that one before," to which Frauke said, with a contented smile on her face: "Yes, nice, isn't it?"

I also well remember how Frauke cried in my arms when Rusty died and how proud and happy she was a little later when she often showed me photos of Fellow. Frauke preferred to keep her emotions in check, but she didn't always manage this and it's exactly this that made her the woman she was and the woman who meant so much to me. And there's one more memory I shall always carry with me. Frauke and I once talked about our favourite sounds. From the bottom of her heart she said: "My favourite sound is the rustling of leaves in the wind." In the future, when I hear this sound, I will always think of my dear Frauke.

Also on behalf of all the staff of the department, I wish to offer you my sincere condolences. If there is anything at all we can do for you, then please don't hesitate to ask us. Frauke will always have a place in our hearts.



## Ludo Hellebrekers

Member of the Council on Animal Affairs, former fellow professor at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Ladies and gentlemen, Achim, family, friends, colleagues,

We are drawing to the end of our farewell to Frauke Ohl today. A good person, a dear daughter and sister, a faithful friend, a committed colleague, but above all a passionate biologist who was fascinated by the relationship between emotions and behaviour, in all its facets, in all kinds of species, between all kinds of people. Frauke's fascination with the link between emotions and behaviour was something she could have lived to the full in the final days and weeks of her illness. But above all the way she herself dealt with it triggered a tsunami of emotions and accompanying behaviour among many of those who were very close to her. Perhaps there could be no more fitting homage to this passionate behavioural scientist.

In recent days we have talked to so many people, also to many of you here now, about Frauke and her key qualities. These conversations, together with the words spoken today, have created a picture that actually far transcends my personal memories and thoughts regarding Frauke. And that, in a rich and rounded manner, helps to shape the memory of Frauke and make it something that personally astonishes me. People have talked about Frauke in terms of her passion for science, her critical sense of herself and her surroundings, her wish to help the people around her, to be able to give, to support. In line with this, her greatest worry in the final period wasn't about herself and what awaited her, but about what her loved ones, those close to her, would have to go through. Frauke's urge to arrange matters properly certainly wasn't confined to her specialist field, her colleagues in the department,

the faculty, the Council, NCad, the many committees on which she sat, but above all and emphatically extended to her immediate relatives, to Achim, her parents, her brother and other family members. Here too she set the bar high for herself, made sure that all the things that were and are unmentionable could indeed be mentioned and discussed, made sure that she clearly stated how she wanted things to be arranged with regard to her dying, with regard to this day, with regard to the period now facing those who are gathered here today.

I knew Frauke since 2004, when as a member of the Advisory Appointment Committee for the professorship of Laboratory Animal Science I met a biologist named Frauke Ohl. From that moment on a collegial friendship grew between us which quickly took on an increasingly personal quality. A close friendship coloured by a shared passion and drive to give moral normative values a stronger place in the social dialogue on how animals are kept and treated.

Against this background, and from the special position that Jolan, my wife, and I have been able to adopt during this sad period, I wish to share with you the process that unfolded prior to this. Frauke was able, in a clear but never coercive manner, to involve people around her in the process that she herself had devised.

And this may be the most characteristic thing about this special woman: she excelled at being able to connect people and worlds of the most diverse natures, to motivate them and to encourage them to motivate others. It was something she could and did do in both her professional and private life. I specifically mention these two separate worlds together. For Frauke these worlds were kept separate to a great extent; few of those around her moved in both these worlds.

So this quality of hers, to connect people and worlds, is even more special and worthy of mention. She was able

- to build a bridge where differences seemed irreconcilable,
- to achieve a consensus when opinions were totally polarised,
- to arrive at joint solutions where a dialogue was previously felt to be completely out of the question.

For these reasons I see Frauke as the great connector.

This ability to connect

- was at the foundation of her loving relationship with her Achim,
- was at the foundation of the warm bond with her parents and family,
- when applied within the Department of Animals in Science and Society created a position of trust that she embodied with much love, commitment and enthusiasm,
- when applied within the Council on Animal Affairs led to an inspired Council team and an impressive body of council members who, together with her and under her inspiring leadership, produced a stream of well-founded, sound and balanced opinion documents that can justifiably be seen as her legacy to Dutch society,
- when applied within the National Committee for the Protection of Animals Used for Scientific Purposes enabled her to make her contribution to the societal aspects regarding the balance between animal experiments policy and ensuring animal welfare,
- when applied within the many committees on which she sat, often as chair and sometimes as member, helped to increase public support for the stated or projected animal policy.

A woman

- who was able to combine natural sciences with social sciences,
- who was able to anchor the societal debate on the keeping of animals within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine,
- who was able to bring together parties on both sides of the spectrum and thus to make a contribution to animal policy that enjoyed public support,
- who was able to guide NGOs and interest groups to an awareness of, and willingness to, formulation of a public vision.

A woman with an impressive list of achievements, in both professional and private terms, who thanks to her ability to connect was able to motivate a large number of people to make a shared and essential contribution to a world in which we treat animals in a more worthy and better way.

You won't have overlooked that the invitation to this service asks you to express your support not with flowers but with a donation to the Centre for Sustainable Stewardship, which she helped to initiate. This centre, now in formation, aims to promote better ways of treating humans and animals, and letting them live together in a shared environment. Some time ago Frauke told Achim that she actually regarded large floral bouquets at her service as an unnecessary expense. Three weeks ago she mentioned to me that if it should come to this, she would regard a contribution to the aforementioned initiative as a nice gesture. I admit that I had repressed this memory and only recalled it when, after her death, a discussion arose about 'what Frauke would want'. Once again, it's a nice example of her 'gentle but firm guiding hand'. A memory like this simply makes one smile, or at least it has that effect on me.

Dear Frauke, you lived your life like there was no tomorrow. Now alas, and to our huge sorrow, this really has come true in your case. You lived your life to the fullest. Your hard work, your unceasing involvement, your drive to walk the extra mile – you never experienced it all as ‘work’ but as ‘life’. Your life!

It was the thing you loved to do most of all, which you wished to throw yourself into and also from which you derived the most energy. There are many people who at a greater age have lived a less full and worthwhile life than you.

So we feel such deep sorrow that you were only given fifty years.

50 years as a daughter and brother, that’s too short.

25 years as a partner and wife of Achim, that’s too short.

12 years as a colleague, friend, chair, fellow committee member, fellow campaigner, that’s too short.

The memories, initiatives and ideas you leave behind will remain with many of us for a long, long time.

It was an honour and an enormous pleasure to spend time with you, to be able to work and discuss with you, and together with you to enjoy the successes we achieved. In short, I enjoyed it! And that surely goes not only for me, but for many others too. We enjoyed being with you!



A book of condolence was opened at the Ministry of Economic Affairs



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