

HONORARY MEMBERS >



Two honorary pins

Tine Davids and Loes Oudenhuijsen

On 25 November 2022 at the Department of Cultural Anthropology of Utrecht University, two former LOVA chairs, Gerdien Steenbeek and Annelou Ypeij, were made honorary member. During the retirement celebration for Gerdien Steenbeek, both were decorated by Tine Davids, LOVA board member, with LOVA brooches especially designed for the occasion by Manon Herrewijnen. Also present were honorary members Joke Schrijvers, José van Santen, Willy Jansen, and Marion den Uyl.

Gerdien Steenbeek worked as Senior Lecturer for nearly forty years, teaching many generations of students in various study program in Anthropology as well in a university-wide Bachelor's program in Liberal Arts and Sciences. Annelou, a close friend of Gerdien, helped organise the retirement celebrations. She had herself retired from her job as Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) of the University of Amsterdam in August 2020. Because of corona pandemic, only an informal farewell party could be organised for Annelou at the time. Reason enough to also take a moment to look back at Annelou's merits at this occasion.

Annelou Ypeij

Tine Davids and Marina de Regt



Already as a student, Annelou was engaged in feminist anthropology. Her activities with LOVA started in the mid-1980s, when, still a student in Utrecht, she participated in study groups discussing feminist literature and organising LOVA study days, initially under the inspiring guidance of Gerdien Steenbeek. In 1985, she co-organised a LOVA study day at Utrecht University.

In May 1989, she co-published her very first article in the LOVA newsletter about theory and practice of feminist methodology, together with Hermien Boschman, Marjonel van Hooft, Bernice de Jong Boers, and Martine de Schutter. She finished her master's degree cum laude in 1990 at Utrecht University.

Soon after, Annelou's career took off, always characterised by a passion and dedication for feminist and gender studies. For her PhD research she went to Peru where she investigated gender in relation to poverty among female micro entrepreneurs. While writing her PhD thesis *Producing against Poverty*, which also appeared in Spanish, she lived in Mexico for six years with her husband Reinoud Roscam Abbing, who was a journalist for NRC Handelsblad at the time, one of the leading newspapers in the Netherlands. She received her PhD degree in 1995. After returning to the Netherlands, she held a post-doctoral position in a project at Erasmus University Rotterdam, for which she studied gender,

motherhood and poverty in the Netherlands. The output of this research resulted in her book *Single Motherhood and Poverty: The Case of the Netherlands* and was published by Amsterdam University Press in 2009.

Since 2003 she worked at CEDLA, from where she continued to publish widely and internationally about gender, social mobility, poverty and tourism in Latin America. At CEDLA she worked on various research projects, including a project on tourism in the Cusco-Machu Picchu region and the impact of tourism on local communities. Within this project but also more generally, Annelou focused on the ethnic and gender identities, and livelihood strategies, of women and men who worked in the lowest echelons of the labour market. Another project concerned a study on gender, family relations and social mobility in the urban context. For this she collected life histories in the Cono Norte area of Lima to better understand processes of national and international migration, changing gender and ethnic identities, social mobility and other family dynamics. Furthermore, she was also involved in the making of a documentary about the Peruvian rockband Uchpa, a project of visual anthropologist Sharis Coppens.

In addition to numerous scientific articles and book chapters, she edited and co-edited several books among which *La ruta Andina: Turismo y Desarrollo sostenible en Perú y Bolivia* (2006) together with Annelies Zoomers, *Polishing the Stone: A Journey through the Promotion of Gender Equality in Development Projects* (2007) together with Rosemary Vargas, and (2009) together with Michiel Baud. Her publications were not her only contributions to Latin American studies in general, and feminist anthropology and gender studies in particular. Next to coordinating the Latin American Studies programme, she taught various courses on gender and supervised many students and PhD students. Among her last PhD students was LOVA member Irene Arends, who defended her PhD *Digital youth spaces in Chile. Young people's everyday negotiations of gender and sexuality* on 11 October 2022.

Throughout these different periods and positions, Annelou remained very active for LOVA. Already in 1998, she took a seat in the LOVA board, first representing the LOVA Study Day Committee (LOSCO). From July 2001 to October 2002, Gerdien and Annelou successively chaired LOVA due to illness of then-chair Karin Willemse. From June 2004 to June 2010, Gerdien and Annelou acted as co-chairs. Under the inspiring leadership of Annelou and with support of Gerdien, Annelou started the internationalisation of LOVA with the first international conference in 2008, entitled *Ethnographies of Gender and Globalisation*. The LOVA journal became bi-lingual and the first international summer school was organised in 2012, an idea of Reinhilde Sotiria König. Together with Reinhilde and Georg Frerks, she edited the volume *Gender and Conflict: Embodiments, Discourses and Social Practices* (Ashgate 2014, republished as an e-edition by Routledge in 2016), which was based on the second LOVA international conference on *Ethnographies of Gender and Conflict* in 2011.

Annelou proved to be multitasking. She was not only very good at organising, as the successful international conferences illustrate, but she also was very creative in accessing funds for LOVA activities, in particular in her position as treasurer from 2011 until 2014. With infinite energy, ease and optimism she executed her different and sometimes difficult tasks and responsibilities for LOVA, next to her regular job obligations. In doing so, she inspired others and convinced them that LOVA was good to go international.

Annelou's contribution to LOVA is priceless, not only because of her achievements in advancing research and teaching on feminist anthropology and gender, but because under her caring hands and spirit LOVA has grown substantially and was taken to a higher level. This is a heritage that we have to cherish and advance.

Annelou, as was to be expected, will not sit still after her retirement. As an affiliated fellow at CEDLA, per 1 November 2020, she intends to continue working on a number of publications. She also remains an

editorial board member of the Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology (JLACA) of the Society of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology (SLACA), a section of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), for which she regularly writes reviews. Recently she published her first autobiographic novel entitled: *Schudverlamming, een autobiografisch verhaal over liefde en verlies*, in which she writes about the illness and the loss of her husband Reinoud.

We admire you for the passion and strength you have displayed all those years, and we hope that you will be engaged with LOVA for many more years to come.

Gerdien Steenbeek

Tine Davids and Annelou Ypeij



On 25 November 2022, Gerdien Steenbeek retired from Utrecht University, and LOVA is proud to have been able to award her an honorary membership on that occasion. She receives this pin for two reasons: for her years of commitment to LOVA, and for her great contributions to feminist anthropological education in the Netherlands.

When Gerdien enrolled as a first-year anthropology student at Utrecht University in 1975, women's studies were on the rise, yet they were not taught in the cultural anthropology course. Together with other students she decided to form a women's group to study the new theorising around the position of women. Her studies, she recounted in an interview during a LOVA promotion afternoon in 1989, were marked by struggles for the recognition of feminist anthropology: "You did that in your spare time. We had formed a study club with friends" (Ypeij 1989). In 1979, José van Santen took the initiative to bring all these women's groups – such groups were active in all anthropology courses – together in a national platform. This was the birth of LOVA, the National Organisation for Women's Studies in Anthropology.

Some eight years after Gerdien, we ourselves started our studies in cultural anthropology. The LOVA women's anthropology group was very active, and organised courses on women's studies and feminist

anthropology. Obviously, we became members. There were courses on women's studies and feminist anthropology. Helen Safa was invited to the Netherlands to teach, and José van Santen taught a course. And above all, Gerdien was available as a supervisor and lecturer. In short, as second-generation feminist anthropologists, we experienced a completely different intellectual climate than Gerdien must have experienced, one in which feminist teaching and research were now accepted. Nonetheless, the battle for the institutionalisation of gender studies was far from over, and for the years to come, Gerdien committed herself to this.

At the time, our LOVA women's group consisted of about eight to twelve students. Although we were self-reliant, Gerdien, meanwhile appointed as a lecturer, remained heavily involved. We remember working group meetings where we discussed texts for publication in the LOVA journal, which Gerdien led with enthusiasm and great critical thinking. Gerdien herself made several contributions to the LOVA journal, such as the 1987 article "Towards a liberating feminism" (Steenbeek 1987). Her greatest contribution from that time is undoubtedly the lecture she gave at the LOVA Day on 13 December 1985 on the machismo-marianismo complex. Although she later published on *quinceañeras* and Surinamese single mothers in the Netherlands, her work on this complex had the most impact. Her lecture resulted in her famous article "Power and mystification," and her theorising was used for many years in the teachings of her colleagues at other universities (Steenbeek 1986).

In 1995, LOVA's organisational structure changed from an informal platform to a formal association. From then on, Gerdien served on the national board for many years. Initially, she did so as chair of the LOVA Study Days Committee (LOSCO). In cooperation with local LOVA groups, she organised study days on Sexuality and the Body, Multiple Identities and Ethnicities, Fundamentalism, and Ethics. She subsequently became chair of the LOVA board, first replacing Karin Willemse during her maternity leave and then – together with Annelou – as co-chair.

Thanks to a strong board, a lot of work was done during that period. The first international conference on Gender and Globalisation was organised in 2008; the website was professionalised; the name of LOVA changed to Dutch Association for Gender Studies and Feminist Anthropology; and, last but not least, on the initiative of Reinhilde König, LOVA managed to build a good reputation in gender studies with the organisation of an annual Summer or Winter School. Thanks in part to Gerdien's tireless efforts, LOVA is an organisation that is alive and kicking after 43 years, with board members and chairs who can be counted among the youngest generations of anthropologists.

Perhaps even greater is Gerdien's impact on teaching. She was appointed lecturer at the department of Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University, where she combined her work for her dissertation with teaching, first as a supervisor of students during their research, and later also by developing courses and teaching those. The content of her courses followed the latest theoretical insights within feminist anthropology. One of the first courses she developed was "Gender, labour and development issues in Latin America." "Gender, power and multiculturalism" followed later, and more recently she developed the course "Anthropology of gender, sexuality and the body." During her 40-year career, she has taught gender sensitivity to hundreds of students. Testimonies in the *liber amicorum* compiled on the occasion of her retirement do not only reveal Gerdien's enthusiasm and her keen interest in students, but they also show how much students have learnt from her, how approachable she was and how she provided them with an important tool, namely a gender lens. Gerdien's teaching changed how the world looks for these students. Her popularity among students led her to win Utrecht University's best teacher award in 2003. Upon winning this award, she was invited to teach anthropology in the Liberal Arts programme, and so the number of students she took under her wings grew once more.

The importance of Gerdien's teaching and the excellent way she conveyed it, go beyond preparing an individual student for society.

The fact that she has taught hundreds of students and sensitised them to gender relations does not only mean that there continues to be an interest in the work of LOVA from the youngest generations, but also that Gerdien is part of a movement towards a society in which young people dare to speak frankly about their sexual preferences, dare to question binary categories and speak out against racism. Full of commitment and passion, Gerdien has contributed enormously to the transmission of theoretical developments and feminist anthropological perspectives to younger generations in the Netherlands over the past 40 years. In her own words: “My goal is to train critical anthropologists who have learned to think creatively and independently. They should choose their own path, but the argument leading to that choice should be consistent and they should consider the consequences of their choice” (Coster 2003). She did not make it easy for students.

LOVA says to Gerdien: thank you, chapeau and kudos!

References

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