

Eddy van der Maarel

addressed by Ladislav Mucina, Stellenbosch

Professor Eddy van der Maarel (or 'Eddy' as he is known to a large family of vegetation scientists, plant ecologists and nature conservationists on six continents) was born in 1934 in Amsterdam. He spent the first part of his career studying and working in The Netherlands – at the universities of Amsterdam, Groningen and Nijmegen, until 1981 when he moved to Uppsala (Sweden) to assume the most prestigious (and definitely the oldest) chair in plant ecology. He returned to his native country after his retirement, where he had already become associated with the University of Groningen once again. His name is connected to a period of great crossing-over in vegetation science. Great minds like Robert Whittaker, Victor Westhoff and Eddy catalysed a great renaissance in vegetation science which brought together various approaches to vegetation on the platform of modern science. The chapter by Westhoff & van der Maarel on the Braun-Blanquet approach in Whittaker's volume on Ordination and Classification of Communities and the recent book on Vegetation Ecology edited by Eddy are landmarks of this renaissance.

Building bridges, and mediating and initiating collaboration have always been most typical activities the name of Eddy is associated with. Friendship through and for science, respect for other people and their opinions, his deep interest in other cultures and languages are the most typical features of his personality. Many of us cherish great friendship with Eddy and his wife Marijke (the equally great woman behind the great man).

He devoted much of his life to furthering opportunities of all of us to communicate the results of our work. Eddy's contribution to our science as long-time Editor-in-Chief of *Vegetatio* and then the foundation of the *Journal of Vegetation Science* and *Applied Vegetation Science* are legendary. He has been one of the founding members of the very successful Working Group on Data Processing in Phytosociology, later the Working Group for Theoretical Vegetation Science. He also served for more than 20 years as a member of the Advisory Council, and more recently as Vice-President of IAVS. Eddy has been an active member of our Society for 45 years.

It makes us always proud to hear that his work has been met with appreciation and recognition. Eddy is elected member of the prestigious Royal Academy of Sciences of The Netherlands and the Royal Swedish Academy, as well as honorary member of the Royal Botanical Society of The Netherlands and the British Ecological Society. In 2004, Eddy received the knighthood in the order of the Dutch Lion from Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands to recognize his life-time work. The Honorary Membership is the highest recognition our learned Society bestows – and one for Eddy has been long overdue.