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In memoriam Waldo H. Zagwijn (1928-2018)

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Published in:
Quaternary Perspectives

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Hoek, W., & Hooghiemstra, H. (2018). In memoriam Waldo H. Zagwijn (1928-2018). *Quaternary Perspectives*, 25(2), 23.

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OBITUARIES

In memoriam Waldo H. Zagwijn (1928-2018)



Prof. Dr. Waldo Heliendoor Zagwijn passed away on 26 June 2018 at the age of 89. Waldo dedicated his life to Quaternary geology and palaeobotany. His work was very influential for the establishment of the chronostratigraphical framework of Western Europe. The combination of his palaeobotanical and geological skills placed in a palaeogeographical context clarified the geological and vegetational developments through time for The Netherlands and Western Europe. He was much interested in vegetation development during the relatively warm interglacials and interstadials. In these periods he could use his palynological expertise and put it in a bio-, climate-, and chronostratigraphical context. He defined and named several of these warm intervals, particularly those of the early Pleistocene. These climatostratigraphical names are still used today. To facilitate geological mapping Prof. Zagwijn was also involved in the lithostratigraphic subdivision for the Netherlands and surroundings. He can be regarded as one of the most eminent stratigraphic experts for the North Sea Basin, and was active within INQUA at several positions, particularly in the Stratigraphy Commission.

Waldo Zagwijn received several awards and honors for his work, including the *Albrecht Penck Medal* (1973) of the German Quaternary Association (DEUQUA), an honorary membership of the Quaternary Research association (QRA) and International Union of Quaternary Research (INQUA). In the Netherlands he received the highest distinction in Dutch earth sciences, the *Van Waterschoot van der Gracht Medal* (1974) issued by the Royal Netherlands Geological and Mining Society. For his scientific contributions to Dutch society, he was appointed by the Queen 'Officier in de Orde van Oranje Nassau'. In 1980 he was elected a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW) and from 1989 to 1993 he was appointed as professor in Quaternary Palynology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

In his PhD thesis '*Aspects of the Pliocene and early Pleistocene vegetation of The Netherlands*', Waldo Zagwijn showed for the first time that the Pleistocene included more than the four ice ages, which was the state of the art in the 1950s. Already in 1957 he argued that the onset of the Pleistocene should be placed at the occurrence of the first significant glaciation in the northern hemisphere, evidenced by the first decrease of thermophilous trees during the Praetiglian. Some earlier, less significant cooling phases had already been recognized by Zagwijn during the preceding Reuverian. Stratigraphically, above the 'Tiglian' interglacial, Zagwijn (1957, 1960) defined the 'Eburonian' glacial, 'Waalian' interglacial and 'Menapian' glacial, based on the palynological occurrence of the thermophilous taxa *Carya*, *Pterocarya* and *Tsuga* in these interglacial deposits. Based on the same species, he argued that the boundary between Early and Middle Pleistocene should be placed between the 'Menapian' and 'Cromerian'. In 1984, Zagwijn & de Jong described the 'Bavelian' interglacial complex chronostratigraphically located between the 'Menapian' and 'Cromerian', which marks the end of the Early Pleistocene. Waldo Zagwijn also worked on the Middle Pleistocene and Late Pleistocene warm phases where he focused on particularly the 'Amersfoort', 'Moershoofd' and 'Hengelo' interstadials (Zagwijn, 1989). At the end of his professional career, Waldo focussed on Eemian and Holocene climate reconstructions based on climate indicator species, and also made an estimate of Eemian sea-level fluctuations (Zagwijn, 1996). With his last papers, he covered most interglacials and interstadials that are currently known within the Quaternary.

The Quaternary community has lost an inspiring scientist who literally worked along the full Quaternary time scale. Waldo Zagwijn will be remembered for his contributions to the subdivision of the terrestrial Pleistocene of Western Europe, and to Quaternary geology in general.

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