



It is with great sadness that we announce that

**Professor Johannes Joseph ("Jon") van Rood**

the founding father of Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide and co-founder of the World Marrow Donor Association, passed away on July 21 at the age of 91. Although his physical condition increasingly limited his mobility, he continued to be scientifically active and could be found in his former office until his final days, still sparkling with ideas, challenging opinions, proposing projects and writing papers.

Jon was born on April 7, 1926, as the son of an architect and a musician and received his medical training at the University of Leiden where he eventually spent almost all of his professional life. He described his entry into transplantation immunology as "a beautiful case of serendipity". In fact, this was serendipity not only for himself, but also for our field. Beginning with his discovery of the HLA antibodies concurrently with Jean Dausset and Rose Payne in the 1950s, his scientific work and his managerial and social qualities have shaped immunogenetics, transplantation immunology and global cooperation in unrelated hematopoietic stem cell transplantation for 60 years. Beyond BMDW and WMDA, he was also co-founder of many important national and international organisations like Eurotransplant, Eurodonor (now known as Matchis), the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation and the European Federation for Immunogenetics. The upcoming 17th International Histocompatibility Workshop in California will be the first one without his guidance.

To highlight the most important aspects of his long and rich scientific life here would be as challenging as enumerating the long list of honours and awards he received over the decades. It is much easier to simply name the only significant prize missing, a fact so eloquently expressed by Leslie Brent in his book *A History of Transplantation Immunology*: "It is unfortunate that the Nobel Committee did not see fit to include him among the recipients of the 1980 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine, for not only was he a co-discoverer of HLA but he has continued to the present day to make many significant contributions to the HLA story." These lines were written in 1996 – and since then his significant contributions continued for over 20 more years and the international networks he established opened a new therapeutic option to thousands of leukaemia patients every year.

We will miss his energy, his sharp mind, his wit, his power of speech and his sense of humour. We are profoundly grateful for having had him as a trailblazer, mentor, colleague and friend.

Carlheinz Müller (President) and Lydia Foeken (CEO)  
for the Board of the World Marrow Donor Association