

LAUDATIO PETER KOOLMEES

Jan Van Hoof

Sarton Medalist Petrus KOOLMEES was born in Gouda in the Netherlands on March 26, 1954. After his secondary studies at the St. Antoniuscollege in Gouda, he was employed for a short time (1971-1973) - and at very young age - as a chemical laboratory assistant in industry.

He very soon displayed an interest in the university work environment and in 1973 was employed in the Department of General Medicine and Large Animal Surgery in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Utrecht. In the meantime he continued his studies and in 1977 was awarded the 'MBO' (Intermediate Vocational Education) degree in Bionics and in 1979 the 'MBO' degree in Histology at the Gijsen Institute in Utrecht. After his transfer to the Department of Veterinary Food Sciences ('VVDO') in the same faculty, this training enabled him to take on the position of histological analyst (1975-1986).

From 1986 to 1990 he was first a technical assistant and then head technician, and since 1990 he has been a researcher and project leader in the same department. During this period he resumed his studies, this time, however, turning his interests to a totally different discipline: history. In 1989 he obtained the Secondary School Teaching Certificate in History (1st level) from the *Hogeschool Midden Nederland* in Utrecht and a degree in History from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the University of Utrecht, specializing in economic and social history.

Under the direction of his promoters, Prof. Jan van Logtestijn, former Chairman of the Department of Veterinary Food Sciences, and Prof. J. van Zanden of the Department of History in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Utrecht, he undertook an extensive study of the origin and development of the (chiefly municipal) slaughterhouses and of meat inspection. His special interest for this field first took form in the publication in 1991 of his book *Vleeskeuring en Openbare Slachthuizen in Nederland*

1875-1985 ("Meat Inspection and Public Slaughterhouses in the Netherlands, 1875-1985").

This research also led to Petrus Koolmees being awarded a doctorate by the University of Utrecht after defending his dissertation entitled *Symbolen van Openbare Hygiëne* ("Symbols of Public Hygiene") on March 6, 1997.

Dr. Koolmees is the author and co-author of numerous scientific publications, not only in the field of the history of veterinary public health, but also in the field of the hygiene, histology and technology of meat and meat products. Besides his scientific responsibilities in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Koolmees is also a member of the Board of the Dutch Veterinary Historical Society. In addition, he is a member of the editorial staff of *Argos*, the bulletin of the Veterinary Historical Society and an active member of the Board of Curators of the University Museum in Utrecht. He is a member of the World Association for History of Veterinary Medicine, from 1988 onwards. In 1998 he became board member and president-elect of this association.

Our faculty has made an unusually fortunate choice with the nomination of Dr. Koolmees as a Sarton medalist. Not only does Dr. Koolmees totally fit the profile established by the Sarton Committee in awarding the medals, but he is also living proof that with dedication and perseverance the saying still holds that "the sky is the limit".

At the same time, the scientific work of Dr. Koolmees fully illustrates the fact that our knowledge of the past is an important tool in evaluating the present and orienting ourselves toward the future.

