



## Johan Leendert van Vessem

January 8, 1932 - January 17, 2023

Johan (Hans) L. van Vessem passed away at home, peacefully in his sleep on January 17, 2023. He was 91 years old. He was born in Rotterdam, The Netherlands and spent the years during World War II with his mother and two sisters while his father was away at sea. Johan made his first trip to the US at 17 while working as a deckhand on a Holland America ship with his father who was the Chief Engineer. Life at sea wasn't for him, however, so after serving in the Dutch Air Force, he attended Utrecht University, graduated as a Chemical Engineer and began working in the oil industry. He spent most of his career with Caltex Petroleum Corporation and became an American citizen in 1978. While working, he and Christina, his best friend and wife of 57 years, travelled and lived at various times in The Netherlands, Germany, the US and England. They spent many happy years in Massapequa, NY where he commuted into NYC on the Long Island Railroad. He finished his career as Managing Director of Caltex International Technical Center (CITC), a global troubleshooting organization, in Sydney Australia in 1996. They retired to Fallbrook, CA where they settled into their dream home. Years later they would downsize and move to la Jolla, CA where he remained until his recent, final, move to Sarasota, FL.

In the evenings, he enjoyed a glass of red wine, classical music on the radio and a large puzzle spread out on the dining room table. He and Christina would go for drives wherever they lived always ending up at lunch at

restaurants they discovered and later shared with their family. His first “big” American car was a Ford LTD that he loved so much he had it shipped from Massapequa to Woking, England during one of the moves. Their explorations resulted in many interesting trips down narrow country lanes in rural England with Christina navigating. In la Jolla, he would sit on his balcony overlooking the Pacific Ocean. He was not at all fond of the surfers on their plankjes, but he loved to see the ships go by and watch the planes flying over the sea. He loved the Mets and the Islanders and usually spent the month of July, wherever he was in the world, enjoying the Tour de France and Wimbledon, but his favorite sport was always soccer which he played as a young man. He was a lifelong Feyenoord supporter, enjoyed English Premier League matches and rooted for The Netherlands in the most recent World Cup. His sense of humor was sharp until the end

He was predeceased by his wife Christina and his two sisters, Hendrika “Henny” Schriel and Arendina “Dinny” Pijselman. He is survived by his son Maxim, daughter-in-law Margaret, his son Paul and his son Ian, his grandchildren Mollie, Owen and Tomas and several nieces and nephews in The Netherlands.

A private celebration of his and Christina’s lives will be held at a later date.  
Truste Hans. We miss you.

# Tribute Wall

BA

“ John employed me whilst he was at Carter as Technical assistant. He invited me to continue in his team when the department moved to Australia. Best boss ever, best job ever because of his thoughtfulness towards me. So sorry I never kept in touch but it is good to know he lived a long, happy and successful life.

---

**Beverley Answer** - February 23, 2025 at 07:09 AM

LB

“ Johan (or John) Van Vessem was throughout our 30 plus years with Caltex Petroleum, my dearest and most trusted friend and colleague. One heck of a good guy in a world with fewer and fewer of them. Rest easy, my friend.

---

**Larry Burke** - September 02, 2023 at 01:17 PM

SY

“Dearest van Vesseem family. Please except my heartfelt condolences. I also apologize for not being able to write this message earlier. I grew up 3 houses around the way from the van Vesseem family. It was when I began dating their son Paul I was given the chance to spend a lot of time with Johan and Christina. Knowing Johans history and the mighty list of his accomplishments, frankly I was in awe of him. He was a force to be reckoned with. He was also the most genuine and generous man I’ve ever met. He and his family put up with having me around and they lovingly exposed me to the finer things in life. It’s the little things that stick with me. For example, while out with the family at a beautiful restaurant I had the pleasure of trying salmon for the first time. Or the coq au vin at Tinas backyard birthday celebration! Their home always felt like a beautiful museum to me, with all the finest things. When Johan and Tina visited Paul and I in San Diego we needed a “few” things and in true Yo-e fashion that equated to 3 shopping carts full of home decor and essentials. Followed by much gratitude and many tears of awe and joy from my eyes. I miss playing cards with Tina and of course I can’t forget Flora the best dachshund ever! I am beyond grateful for the love I received from Paul and his family during those years and beyond. Those were good times for sure. All things must come to an end, thankfully memories live on. Rest in peace Yo-e and Tina! You were, are and always will be loved and remembered. With much love and sincerest condolences, Sue Yungandreas

---

susie yungandreas - February 16, 2023 at 12:23 PM

MV

“ 2 files added to the tribute wall



M vV - February 03, 2023 at 12:53 AM



“ *Puzzles. That is what I remember, he was a man of 'projects'. In the US he was always pottering about the house. Make sure it was well looked after. I remembering him at Massapequa climbing up the gazebo to wrap it before winter, but the spike at the top was going to rip the tarp so off he went looking for a solution by taking one of Tina's kitchen jugs, flipping it upside down over the spike effectively removing the point. He was a McGyver and so satisfied! In San Diego he was always outside maintaining the pool area. He religiously pursued the bugs with spray but welcomed the hummingbirds. He just loved being busy! But in Australia he didn't have the house upkeep so he did loads of giant puzzles. The dining table was always covered by the latest 5000 piece Ravensburger puzzle. Only Ravensburger because they were the best and as a result the kids and I always only buy Ravensburger too. Mollie has definitely inherited his puzzle gene. Owen has inherited his work ethic. Tom has inherited his sport's talent. He is in all of them* 💕🙏

Penny Evershed van Vessem - January 28, 2023 at 04:16 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Memories Album*



---

**Maloney Funeral Home** - January 28, 2023 at 12:18 AM

MV

“ January 16, 2023

*Dear Johan Leendert van Vesseem*

*My name is Tomas Coenraad van Vesseem. You may not know me very well but and I am your grandson. I am 19 years old and I live in Sydney Australia with your other grandchildren, My Sister Mollie Rye van Vesseem whose 24 and My Brother Owen Leendert van Vesseem who is 23.*

*A little bit about me is My dream is to be an actor/director/writer, I work as a bartender in a theatre and I play baseball for sport as a catcher and the team I support is the New York Mets.*

*I haven't known you very well for most of my life but I've always been proud to say that you were my opa and that you, Oma and my uncles and father were my link to being Dutch. I was always so proud to be Dutch and have a Dutch name because it made me feel special and meant that even though you lived far away and our talks have always been few and far between I'd always stay connected to you and that I've always loved you. Every year you would send me a special singing card on my birthday and I can't express how much that gesture meant to me. It was something I'd always look forward to and I've held onto most of them and plan to keep them as long as possible.*

*You've lived such a full life and I'm so unbelievably grateful to have had you in my life. Before you go I want you to know that I love you so much and you've made an impact on my life that I will never forget and I hope I get to see again one day. I'd love to know all about you.*

*Love Tomas*

---

**Maxim van Vesseem** - January 26, 2023 at 03:39 PM



*This made me cry. Tom and John would have been the best of mates. Their love of sport would have really connected them. Tom always pulls out the Orange jersey when the World Cup is on and he can talk my leg off with the latest Mets stats. I like to imagine them both side by side cheering and shouting at the TV watching the game play.*

---

**Penny Evershed van Vessem** - January 28, 2023 at 04:04 PM