

IN MEMORIAM: WALTER (WOUTER) VAN STIGT  
(1927–2015)

Walter van Stigt died on November 24, 2015. He is the author of *Brouwer's Intuitionism*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1991, a book treating Brouwer's life, Brouwer's philosophy and Brouwer's mathematics. Walter was deeply convinced of the importance of Brouwer's ideas and believed that more attention should be given to the origin and philosophical background of those ideas than we are used to give it. His book contains 13 appendices with texts and correspondence of Brouwer, the first one being the profession of faith that Brouwer made, at the age of 17, before the congregation of the Remonstrant Church at Haarlem. Walter also published *Life, Art and Mysticism*, (Notre Dame J. Formal Logic, 37 (1996) 381–429), a translation of *Leven, Kunst en Mystiek*, the text of a series of lectures Brouwer gave at the age of 22. Only fragments of this text formed part of Brouwer's *Collected Works*, published in 1975, and Walter thought the complete text was important for understanding Brouwer. Together with Paolo Mancosu he edited *From Brouwer to Hilbert, the Debate on the Foundations of Mathematics in the 1920s*, Oxford UP, 1998. For this book he translated a number of Brouwer's papers into English.

Walter (Wouter Petrus) van Stigt was born January 1, 1927, the eldest son in a large and staunchly catholic Amsterdam family. The architect Joop van Stigt was one of his brothers. Walter joined the Missionaries of the Holy Family and, having studied philosophy and theology in Oudenbosch, was ordained priest in 1953. His order asked him to study English language and literature in Nijmegen. He had musical gifts: he played the flute and had a beautiful tenor voice. In 1956, he organized, in the Concert Hall in Nijmegen, a performance of Henry Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*, a *Masque* based upon Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He was the producer and played the part of Oberon himself. His pride and joy in this project remained with him for the rest of his life. In order to provide authentic musical accompaniment for the Fairy Queen production, he constructed the first of the three harpsichords that he was to build over the course of his life. The final and most beautiful one was constructed together with his brother Willem and sister Nanda in 1995.

In 1958, Walter obtained his bachelor's degree and he left the priesthood. He moved to England and became a teacher of French and English. In 1960,

he married Judith Sachs. They have three children, Nicholas, Kathryn and Elisabeth. In 1963, he started his part-time study of mathematics at London University and completed it in three years. The logician G. Kneebone was one of his teachers. He asked Walter, upon Brouwer's death, in 1966, to help him write an obituary. Walter became Senior Lecturer in Mathematics and, somewhat later, Dean, at Whitelands College. Encouraged by G. Kneebone, he continued his study of intuitionism. He got the impression that the spirit of Brouwer's revolution was insufficiently kept alive: for the greater part, ongoing research in intuitionistic mathematics looked 'logical', and Brouwer had always emphasized that mathematics comes first and logic should play a minor rôle. In 1971, he obtained his Ph.D. degree with a dissertation on Brouwer.

At the instigation of Dirk van Dalen, the Dutch Organization for Pure Scientific Research *ZWO* endowed him with a visitor's grant at Utrecht for the academic year 1976/77. He spent the year working on his book and collecting all kinds of material connected with Brouwer. He contacted Brouwer's nephew and heir, L.E.J. Brouwer, and had conversations with many persons who had been involved with Brouwer. At the suggestion of L.E.J. Brouwer, he found the correspondence between Brouwer and his promotor Korteweg in Amsterdam. This correspondence showed that Korteweg at first had intended to reject Brouwer's dissertation. He also discovered Brouwer's notes for courses in Berlin and Cambridge in a cellar at the Technical University in Delft. In Göttingen, he found the correspondence between Hilbert and Brouwer. Impressed by the thorough organization of the *Hilbert-Archive* in Göttingen, he founded the *Brouwer-Archive*, as a safe haven for his discoveries. He always advocated a careful management of this Archive, for which he and Dirk van Dalen were responsible. The Brouwer-Archive now is part of the *Noord-Hollands Archief* in Haarlem.

In 1982, the deanship at Whitelands College ended, because of a reorganization, and Walter became part-time professor in mathematics and Director of the London program of the University of Southern Maine. A Leverhulme Fellowship enabled him to continue his research in the philosophy of mathematics at Wolfson College, Oxford. He cooperated with Michael Dummett, Robin Gandy, and Dan Isaacson. He remained active, also for other American universities, at Kingston University and retired in 1997.

Walter had many gifts. He was energetic, optimistic, full of initiative and enthusiasm, and kind and sympathetic towards everyone he met. He advised us to be always proud of Brouwer, to be careful with his heritage and to try to really understand him.

Wim Veldman