



**IN MEMORIAM DR G. L. KROL**  
September 12, 1912 – May 8, 1984

Gerard Leendert Krol passed away the 8th of May during his daily morning walk with his dog. The last few months he was in poor health, yet his death came suddenly, the way he had wished it to be. Krol was an active and determined man; he disliked procrastinations.

He was born in Bandjermasin the son of a mining engineer-geologist who was employed by the Bureau of Mines in the Dutch East Indies. These circumstances influenced his life in several ways. Through his native country and encouraged by his parents he developed a fascination for the larger features of the earth, the Indonesian Archipelago, the volcanoes, the structures, and the landscapes. But he also took a liking to those who lived under colonial rule, and who could only become equals through the best education possible.

He completed his secondary education in the Netherlands at a boarding school under strict rule, whereafter he enrolled at the Leiden University to study geology. During those years he managed to combine in inimitable ways his studies, an active participation in student life, and the nursing and care for his mother. His post-graduate studies under L. U. de Sitter were based on field work in the Italian Bergamasc Alps and led to his Ph.D. degree. His thesis already testified to his vision on geology, viz. his perception for the general line and his regard for Science, which he always would approach without pretentions.

In the same year, 1939, he started work for the Billiton Company, first in the Asahan valley, central Sumatera (Indonesia), then South Bantam (Java), followed by a short stay on the island of Belitung, after which he was definitely placed in Sorowako, Sulawesi (formerly Celebes), with the subsidiary Celebes Mining Company. This company he would leave in 1950, after becoming Chief Executive. The job in Sulawesi entailed exploration for high grade nickel deposits in lateritic, weathered peridotites. Severely colour-blind, he developed an alertness for characteristics other than colour. During his field work he recognised the significance of geomorphology and he impressed its importance upon his prospecting staff in the search for ore reserves.

During his career he went directly for the potential of a deposit; if he considered that uncertain it would be difficult to convince him to put in any additional work. In mining operations he knew exactly the place of the geologist; 'pro-

duction first', but he also showed manager and miner the advantage geological studies offer for a more appropriate and more profitable exploitation. Krol was one of the first ore geologists from the Netherlands. He had a keen eye and good feeling for the right man in the right spot. He knew the right moment to approach people, while he never hesitated to tackle a difficult situation himself before asking others.

Krol's character probably showed most clearly during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, 1942-1945. Commissioned in front of the troops and given special orders, he served with distinction. Time in Japanese prisoner of war camps was extra hard for a man of his character. After the liberation Krol served again in special military and administrative positions. Official recognition followed soon and he was knighted in the Order of 'Oranje Nassau with Swords'.

In 1953 he returned to the Netherlands in preparation for his appointment to Chief Geologist of the Billiton Company, a position he held for almost fifteen years, until he became director of exploration. This position he kept until his retirement on December 1, 1972.

While in the Netherlands Krol started to lecture on geology and mineral exploration, first at Leiden University, later at the I.T.C. in Delft. In this last position he found his mission, teaching students from developing countries the practicalities of exploration for mineral resources. He showed unlimited patience for all their many questions and never tired in pointing his pupils toward directly useful matters.

Krol's nature was patriarchal, in the best meaning of that term and he was always open for knowledgeable people. He liked people, he was an extrovert and always surrounded by friends and acquaintances, fellow Rotarians, colleagues, national as well as international. He was co-founder of the Société Géologique Appliquée (GSA), for many years member of its Council and later Honorary Member. He did this with the notion to bring European mineral explorationists on a par with their North American colleagues, colleagues with whom he, an economic geologist, felt perfectly at ease.

When asked by De Sitter to be his successor as Chairman of the KNGMG he first hesitated. The Society was in bad shape, threatening to become divided into numerous subdisciplines, while the mining engineers contemplated to go it alone. Yet, later, Krol accepted and coordinated a restructuring of the Society that started in 1968. He strongly promoted all activities that could benefit the Society, strengthening the common interests of geologists and mining engineers. It was particularly noticeable how carefully he prepared for all events. His merits were acknowledged and he was made an Honorary Member of the KNGMG in 1976.

Gerard Krol was an outstanding man. For many, outside and inside the world of geology, he was a man living with great respect for the splendour of nature with its engaging variety of human beings, beings with a mandate: cooperate in the Creation. This was his religion and he was its true servant.

L. J. Fick ('s-Gravenhage)