



# MEMORIAL SERVICE

— *for Hansje* —

*aka* Johanna Anna Helena Brodhaag

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## SHORT BIOGRAPHY of HANSJE



Johanna Anna Helena Brodhaag was born on December 27, 1947 in Amsterdam, Holland. Her mother was Johanna Catherine Maria Helena (née Bleekemolen). Her father was Johan Brodhaag who was a Dutch Indonesian. As a young child, Johanna became known as Hansje.

Hansje's mother may or may not have been born a Dutch Jew. She survived World War II living in Amsterdam as a Christian. However, later in life she affiliated herself with many Jewish causes and traditions and bestowed them upon her daughter. Ultimately, she died in Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem in 1995 at the age of 70 years old, which was devastating to Hansje.

Hansje's father was originally from Indonesia, a Dutch colony. He became a prisoner of war in a Japanese concentration camp during World War II. We believe that the camp was in Thailand and was the one that the movie *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* (1957) was based upon. It starred William Holden and Alec Guinness. It is considered one of the best movies of all time. Her father visited her several times in the U.S. Ultimately, he died in 2005 at the age of 88 years old in a small town in Holland.

Hansje had only one first cousin named Cornelis Wilhelmus Maria Nieboer also known as Cees (pronounced like "case"). Cees' mother was Hansje's only aunt. Cees currently lives in Slovenia with his wife. He had grown up with Hansje when they were young in Amsterdam. He later lived in Dubai for a number of years.

Hansje's other cousins are Yvonne von Vegten, who lives in Amsterdam and Miriam Smit, who lives in The Hague. Hansje and Yvonne were very close and spoke most days during the week. Yvonne and her husband, Marco, have come to the US to visit Hansje several times.

Hansje spent her early years living in the Far East. Her father worked for the Shell Oil Company, which was originally a Dutch company before it became a multinational company and relocated to London, England. She went to a private school for foreigners in Brunei, where she grew up. While in Brunei, she became very good friends with the man who later became the Sultan of Brunei and who still reigns there today. While in Brunei, she drove an Alfa Romeo sports convertible and once ran it into a ditch. Along the way, it is believed that she also lived in Malaysia and Singapore. She obtained a BA in Business Administration from Pavia College in The Netherlands.

Her first job out of college was as a stewardess, now known as a "flight attendant" for KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, which was originally a Dutch company, but ultimately became owned by a French company. Her tenure as a stewardess lasted from 1968 through 1976.

Her first marriage was to a British gentleman named Robert Cranmore. Their wedding in Amsterdam was attended by Hansje's cousin, Cees, who as a young boy was sitting in a chair with a top hat (picture shown in series). They lived in Brunei. It is not known how long they remained married. Her second husband was a man with the first name Eelco, who it is believed was a Dutch man. It is not known how long they remained married.

Hansje then married Fredy Enggist, a Swiss man. Together Hansje and Fredy the Hotel Vanessa located in the Alpine town of Verbier in the Valais Canton of Switzerland. Fredy was a renowned cook and the hotel featured a high end restaurant. The hotel was located in the beautiful mountains of Switzerland adjacent to various ski slopes. Hansje's tenure at the Hotel Vanessa was from 1976 to 1980. Fredy went on to work for Nestles, the large Swiss food company. At that point, Hansje and Fredy became separated and divorced.

At some point, Hansje became employed by Boris Birshstein, from the Soviet Union, who was very much her mentor. His company named The Seabeco Group was based in Zurich, New York, Moscow and Antwerp. She lived in all of those places as well as Moldova. The company traded in all sorts of commodities and leased and owned various aircraft to transport its executives throughout the world. At different times, the company owned different models of a Gulfstream. If Hansje had not traveled much in the past (which she had), she traveled the entire globe while working for Seabeco. Hansje's tenure at Seabeco was from 1980 through 2000. Over the years, she kept in touch with Boris on a weekly basis.

The chief pilot of Seabeco was a man named Captain Peter P. Zapalo Jr., who had previously been in the US Air Force. At some point, he was a pilot for Air Force One. In later years, Peter became the love of her life until he died a few years ago. He had resided in Pennsylvania.

Hansje also worked at Seabeco with Dirk Blommaert, who resides in Brussels and Mosha, an Orthodox Soviet citizen, who has lived in Israel for many years. She regularly kept up with both of these men and their relatives.

In the late 1990s, Hansje had a boyfriend in Edmonton, Alberta CA. His name is not known, but he was a Formula One race car driver. Hansje lived in Edmonton for a while and became a huge fan of Formula One races.

After Hansje's mother passed in 1995, she visited the US many times and ultimately moved here in or about 1999. She ended up living in The French Court Condominiums, where she began a new stage of her life and career. She lived there about 5 years and befriended Janet Codos, Sharon Bregman, Kathy Gilbert, Kid Kelly, Angie Harmon and Jason Seahorn.

In around 2021, Hansje moved to The Courts at Glenpointe Condominiums. She made many friends here and became a regular at the swimming pool in the summer, Mah Jongg, Rummikub and some bridge games throughout the years.

In or about 2003, she began working for Starsupply Petroleum and her boss, Robert Ryneveld, which was based in Englewood, New Jersey with other offices throughout the US and Europe. She was able to utilize her extensive language skills for Rob and the company. Ultimately, the company was sold and began a new life as Starfuels Commodities. Both Starsupply and Starfuels specialized in trading of essential commodities throughout the world.

Along the way, Hansje became a close member of several families. Hansje first met Richard Pineles about 25 years ago through their common friend, Janet Codos, who lived on French Court, when she first lived in New Jersey. Hansje became a third daughter to Ann Pineles and a sister to Richard, Karen and Jane. She attended most family functions, weddings, Jewish holidays at the synagogue and holiday meals.

She also became a regular in the Ryneveld family including Rob, Maria, Victor, Stephanie, Natalie, Philip, Maria's sister and Rob's ex-wife, Melanie. She saw the kids grow up from a young age to the married adult children they became.

Then, Hansje became an integral member of the Blumenthal family when they first lived at The Glenpointe. She befriended Jaclyn Sammis who later wed Lenny Blumenthal. The Blumenthals gave birth to their daughter, Lena, about 13 years ago. Hansje became the "grandmother" of Lena. Later, came Josh, who became her "grandson." The Blumenthals at some point moved to Connecticut. Hansje became a large part of the Blumenthal family and participated in many morning breakfasts as well as more formal affairs.

Lastly, Hansje became close friends with her neighbor, Dr. Michael DiStefano and his partner, Laureen Lombardi. During Hansje's illness for the last two years of her life, Michael and Laureen, spent a immense amount of time caring for and being Hansje's friend in her time of great need. She traveled with them several times to Florida, which was a great relief to her. They spent an intense amount of time together for her last months on earth.

Hansje was not extremely religious, but she celebrated most major Jewish and Christian holidays all over the world. She was as comfortable in a synagogue as she was in a church. Throughout most of her life she had many dogs and cats, just not her own in the U.S.

Along the way, Hansje had several different stages of her life that were for the most part kept apart from one other. She had several different marriages and boyfriends, and almost nobody knew about all of them. She lived in about 10 different countries all over the world. She spoke almost 10 languages, most fluently and a few basically. She traveled and visited most corners of the earth. She made friends wherever she went and whatever stage of her life she was living. She had a large number of colleagues that were very close to her. In summary, Hansje had a very rich and rewarding life in which she did more than most people could ever imagine. She enlightened and enhanced the lives of all her friends, relatives and colleagues that she has known and will be missed by all.



# PLACES in which JOHANNA LIVED

1. Amsterdam, Holland EU
2. Brunei
3. Singapore
4. Malaysia
5. Antwerp, Belgium EU
6. Cambridge, England UK
7. Verbier, Switzerland
8. Zurich, Switzerland
9. Moscow, Russia CCRP
10. Moldova
11. Edmonton, Alberta CA
12. Teaneck, NJ USA







*I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.  
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.  
I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,  
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.  
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;  
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.*

*- Anonymous*







