

Gerard Rieck (1911–2010)

Gerard Daniel Rieck passed away on Tuesday 11 May 2010 at the age of 98. He obtained his masters degree in chemistry from the Municipal University of Amsterdam in 1939 and during this period of study he worked as a research assistant



for Bijvoet for 2 years. From 1939 to 1941 he was a teacher at different high schools, and in 1941 he started work as a research scientist in the Laboratory of Physical Chemistry of the Philips Lighting Division in Eindhoven. In 1945 he became group leader of this laboratory. With some delay, owing to the Second World War, he received his doctoral degree from the University of Utrecht in 1945 with a thesis entitled *X-ray diffraction studies of the crystal structure of α -succinic acid*.

Between 1949 and 1959 he worked at Philips Research Laboratories, mainly on X-ray diffraction studies and metal research. This work resulted in several papers on crystal-

lographic aspects of tungsten crystals and wires, and in 1967 in a book entitled *Tungsten and its Compounds*. In 1959 he was appointed Professor and Chair of Physical Chemistry of Solids at the newly founded Eindhoven University of Technology, a post he occupied until his retirement in 1982. Under his leadership his research group published many papers on interdiffusion studies of metals, often resulting in new phase diagrams. In these studies X-ray diffraction was an important tool; as an example, I mention the studies of texture–structure relationships in intermetallic diffusion. He liked teaching and illustrated his lectures with carefully prepared experiments.

Rieck performed several functions in the Dutch organization for crystallography (FOMRE). From 1952 to 1966 he was an editor of Volume III, *Physical and Chemical Tables*, of *International Tables for X-ray Crystallography*; from 1966 to 1975 he was a member of the Commission on Crystallographic Teaching of the International Union of Crystallography; and several times he acted as Dutch delegate at General Assemblies of the Union.

He was titular member and secretary of the Commission for High Temperatures and Refractory Materials of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry from 1969 to 1979.

He held several positions in the Faculty of Chemical Engineering, amongst others as Dean from 1976 to 1982; he was a member of the board of the University from 1971 to 1973. In these positions he showed his managerial capacities.

His favourite sport was alpine skiing, which he continued until his 90th birthday, proud of being the oldest active Dutch skier.

Gerard Rieck was appointed by Her Majesty Queen Beatrix as Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion.

Those who knew him will remember him as a kind and helpful colleague, an able organizer and an involved teacher.

Rudi Metselaar

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