

Speech at the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Gebrs de Jong's Leen. Fries Scheepvaart Museum, Sneek 2 October 2021.

Herre Kingma, Chairman of the Board of St. Gebroeders de Jong's Leen

Ladies and gentlemen,

or should I say "cousins", after all we are family, in the second to the twelfth degree and for the younger ones among us even further, in their generation they are already sixteen degrees apart. Distant relatives by now, but all of us are bet³-great grandchildren of our common bet³-great grandparents Herre Tjeerds Rinia* Cornwerd 1754 and Reinskje Sibbrands van der Sluys* Hellevoetsluis 1763, grandparents of the founder of the Leen, Tjeerd de Jong* Joure 1839, youngest from the family Joukje Herres Rinia and Sytse de Jong. Herre and Reinskje married on 5 March, shortly before the French Revolution broke out on 14 July 1789. They raised four children, Tjeerd, Jeltje, Joukje and Sibrichtje, from whom the stakes A, B, C and D of the Leen were born.

Mrs. Hester Postma, it is nice that you and your staff have given us hospitality in the Fries Scheepvaart Museum to our Leen and family, for some of us historical ground, as the birthplace of their ancestors.

On 2 September 1921, Tjeerd de Jong established the Gebroeders de Jong's Leen Foundation partly on behalf of his deceased brother Reiner* 1837. The brothers were childless and unmarried and wanted their property, the farm in Westermeer and a small capital, to benefit the study and education of their nephews and nieces, respectively their descendants. The brothers Jan Marten and Eelco Paulus Hyacynthius Kingma, bankers at Kingma's Bank and their cousin Paulus, landowner and dairy producer in Lemelerveld were the first administrators. Initially, capital and revenues from rents were too little to make any significant long-term payments, so they saved and managed the property carefully until, in 1939, Tjeerd Prosée, a descendant from the Rinia branch, was the first to receive an allowance, or a pension as it is called with the Leen. Tjeerd contracted polio and had to discontinue his education in 1943. In that same year, Jan van Erp passed a competition of the Leen and received a pension that was continued for 12 years. He was the only one at the time who received a pension. It enabled him to complete his HBS in the difficult years in and after the 40-45 war and to study electrical engineering in Delft. I hope he can now follow us on his computer screen in Chicago, where he has lived for decades.

Jan is the oldest pension-receiver among us, but the record number and duration of pensions is held by Marten Kingma* Makkum 1947. He received pensions from 1959-1974, thirteen or fourteen in all. Another record holder is Herre

Halbertsma* Sneek. Born in 1920, he was by far the oldest in age, but had already passed the age of sixty when he received a pension for his impressive dissertation with the equally impressive title 'Friesland's Antiquity'. It is also remarkable that he was curator - later director - of the Friesian Maritime Museum for 28 years. The capital and the proceeds from leasing steadily increased through wise and clever policy, as a result of which more pensions were given. The counter now stands at 250 or even more.

Today we are going to listen to a few special pension recipients. Prof. Tjalling Halbertsma tells us about his field research in Mongolia for which he received two pensions and finally another one for his doctorate. We will also listen to musical performances by pension recipients mezzo-soprano Rosina Fabius, PhD student in oncology and violinist Dieuwke Mink van der Molen and viola player Ellie Nimeroski.

More important than the total number of pensions in 100 years is that we can now accommodate about twenty students at a time. Now that we are celebrating our 100th anniversary, this is certainly a reason for a party, but also to reflect on how the Leen has performed, how our pension recipients, from teachers to professors and from nurses to business managers, have fared and whether and how the Leen can do even better. Therefore, this is not a classical jubilee history book. The VU, in the person of Floris van Berckel Smit, was prepared to research the development of the Leen over the past 100 years, how we have managed, the governance, and if possible with recommendations for improvement. He makes a series of recommendations for this at the end of his book.

Family, I end with a few lines of poetry by the poet Obe Postma, known to few in the Netherlands but world-famous in Friesland, and ... a descendant of Herre Rinia. Obe Postma was a great-grandson of Herre Tjeerds Rinia, his mother Sybrichtje Tjeerds Rinia a full cousin of Tjeerd de Jong.

In the poem **Te Harns** he visits Harlingen and compares himself in subtle irony with the great German poets Goethe and Rilke. I read the first four lines:

*Goethe die in reis nei Italië en Rilke nei Ruslân,
En as in oar minske kamen hja werom.
Ik haw op myn âlde dei nei Harns ta west;
In oar minske koe ik net wurde, mar ik haw stien op it
 heechste fan 'e bolwurkstún –*

[In translation:

*Goethe travelled to Italy and Rilke to Russia
And they came back as different people
I went to Harlingen in my old age;
I didn't become another person, but I did stand
 on the highest point of the bulwark garden -]*

How something small can be big. A nice motto for our humble de Jong's Leen the next hundred years!

Thank you!