

In Memoriam

Isabella H. Ph. DIEDERIKS-VERSCHOOR

On 17 October 2017 Professor Emerita Dr Isabella Diederiks-Verschoor, Honorary Member of the Board of Editors of Air & Space Law, passed away peacefully at her home in Baarn, the Netherlands, at 102 years of age. She will undoubtedly be greatly missed by her family, her colleagues, her numerous friends and all those living and working all over the world who knew her in person, attended her guest lectures, read her many publications, studied her excellent books, 'An introduction to Air Law' and 'An Introduction to Space Law', and above all, by those who enjoyed her loyal friendship.

Isa Verschoor, as she was known at that time, studied Dutch law after her school years at the University of Leiden, where she graduated in 1935.

After her Leiden years she wrote her dissertation, during which time she also worked as a lawyer ('advocaat') in Amsterdam. Her dissertation showed her already great interest in aviation in general and in air law in particular: '*The Brussels Convention of 1938 Concerning Assistance and Salvage of Aircraft and by Aircraft at Sea*' (Utrecht, 1943).

At Utrecht University she began teaching air law, later air and space law, in 1953 and continued until 1984. In those thirty-one years a large number of students followed her popular, enthusiastic and inspiring lectures; some 500 students sat the exam.

Her book, '*Inleiding tot het Luchtrecht*' – 'Introduction to Air Law' – was in the Dutch language but subsequent revised editions were, and are, in English, as well as several other languages. Isa herself supervised eight revisions and prints of this book. In September 2017, the tenth edition was revised and edited by Professor Dr Pablo Mendes de Leon.

Isa Diederiks was one of the founders of the field of space law and of the International Institute of Space Law (IISL). She presented at the IISL's first Colloquium in 1958, one year after the launch of the first Russian Sputnik, in The Hague. She was IISL President from 1973–1990, and thereafter she became its first President Emerita. She received the IISL's Lifetime Achievement Award in 1999, during the International Astronautical Congress held in Amsterdam.

Each year since 2001 the 'Diederiks-Verschoor Award' is presented by the Board of Directors of the IISL for the best IISL Colloquium paper by an author not older than thirty years and who has not published more than five papers in the IISL Proceedings.

Professor Diederiks' other excellent 'Introduction' is 'An Introduction to Space Law', published in 1993. Its third edition was published in 2008. This book has also been translated into many languages.

She was a proud member of the *Académie de l'air et de l'espace*, the Air and Space Academy based in Toulouse, France.

Not only 'Utrecht' had Isa Diederiks' full attention for teaching. She provided numerous guest lectures in many countries, including in Australia, Cameroon, Canada, China, France, Greece, Indonesia, Korea and the United States.

Besides these guest lectures in many foreign countries, Isa travelled even more. As already mentioned above, she was President of the IISL and Member of the Legal Committee in the Netherlands of ICAO, to name but a few.

The *Mother of Air Law*, she was called abroad! Professor Böckstiegel provide a striking description in the first Liber Amicorum titled 'Airworthy', presented to Isa Diederiks in 1985 on the occasion of her 70th birthday:

It is hard to believe that she has gone beyond the retirement age at the University and in fact is going to celebrate her 70th birthday. An academic teacher and an organizer of professional institutions and as a personal friend. Whenever advice was needed she was available. Her great asset is especially to combine a clear picture of what she considers necessary with a talent for inter-personal communication and a human touch.

It is therefore not at all astonishing that she has friends all over the world.

Isa Diederiks was also one of the driving forces behind the creation, in 1975, of this Kluwer periodical, the English-language 'Air Law', now appearing under the name of 'Air & Space Law'.

After her farewell from Utrecht University in 1984, she, together with Professor Dr H. A. Wassenbergh, founded the International Institute of Air and Space Law at Leiden University.

Isa considered it particularly important to keep in touch with her former students at frequently held meetings organized by her, so that everyone could meet, speak and network. Later, these meetings were organized by the 'International Society for Air and Space Law', the 'ISA Foundation', under the chairmanship of Professor Dr Peter Haanappel.

An unique person has left us.

She will be sadly missed by all who were so lucky to have known her.

Jan Willem Storm van 's Gravesande