



## Dr. Siwo Rel de Kloet

February 22, 1933 - August 30, 2023

Dr. Siwo Rel de Kloet, 90, passed away unexpectedly on August 30th, 2023, in Tallahassee, FL with family by his side. Siwo was born on February 22nd, 1933, to Cornelis and Aafke de Kloet in Maarssen, Netherlands and he was the second of four children. Siwo married the love of his life, Dineke, on March 24th, 1964. Together, they had three sons (Arne, Edwin and Rolf), one daughter (Annette), and eight grandchildren. While his childhood was heavily impacted by World War II, which he often told stories about, he also, at an early age, displayed a natural curiosity and a love for music and nature. These traits were instilled in by his parents and were maintained throughout his life.

Conducting scientific research was Siwo's career and passion. He earned his PhD in 1961 from the Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht, Netherlands and completed his post-doctoral studies in 1963 at the Rockefeller Institute in New York City, USA where he played a key role in the initial discovery and isolation of mRNA. In 1967, after working at Philips in Eindhoven, Netherlands for over three years, Siwo, Dineke and their eldest son, Arne, immigrated to Tallahassee, FL, USA. What was meant to be a temporary position, turned into a 30-year career as a Professor at Florida State University. There, he taught and mentored graduate students and conducted scientific research. In 1993, Siwo de Kloet and family started a biotech company (Animal Genetics). Establishing the business, and the consequent research and service that it

provides, is one of Siwo's proudest professional accomplishments. Up until the day that he passed away, he continued to pursue his passion for science by directing research and development for this company. Most recently, however, Siwo's efforts were primarily dedicated to helping his youngest son, Rolf, fight his long battle against brain cancer.

Aside from research, Siwo's interests were countless. He loved listening to classical music and spending several hours a day playing his Steinway piano. He appreciated nature. He aspired to make a positive impact on the lives of wild birds and other endangered animals, and at a younger age, he would seek to experience nature and wildlife first-hand. He enjoyed traveling the world to do so. At the age of 22, he toured Scandinavia for two months by way of his new "machine" (a 10-speed bicycle) and was, at that point in his life, referred to as the "Flying Dutchman". After moving to the US, he cherished traveling back to his home, the Netherlands. As he aged, he continued to lovingly tend to his birds, fish and plants at his home in Tallahassee and he enjoyed watching nature documentaries. He also loved to read. Siwo had a voracious appetite for books, scientific papers and (primarily Dutch) news articles. He had an incredible sense of humor and loved to laugh and make people laugh. He appreciated his soft-boiled egg and a bowl of fruit in the morning and his glass of Chardonnay at night, and he absolutely treasured walking through his life with Dineke by his side.

Siwo is preceded in death by his parents (Cornelis and Aafke de Kloet), his brother (Kees de Kloet) and his son (Rolf de Kloet). He is survived by his wife, Dineke; two sons, Arne (Katherine) and Ed; daughter, Annette (Eric); daughter-in-law, Marnie; and eight grandchildren (Jacob, Brett, Carmen, Josh, Skylar, Gabriela, Brinley and Myles). He is also survived by his sister, Sonja; brother, Ron (Marian); and numerous nieces and nephews.

Siwo was a brilliant scientist, as well as a devoted husband, papa, and opa. As such, his life was filled with amazing discoveries and countless heartfelt memories. Siwo's love for Dineke and his unwavering dedication to family underscore the importance of nurturing personal relationships alongside professional pursuits. His life story is a testament to the power of passion, commitment, and the enduring bonds of family. A Celebration of Siwo's Life will take place at 2PM on Sunday, October 29th at The Retreat at Bradley's Pond, 9002 Bradley Rd, Tallahassee, FL 32309. While flowers are welcome, memorial contributions in honor of Siwo may also be made to the World Wildlife Fund or to the American Brain Tumor Association, causes that he felt passionate about.

(World Wildlife Fund; 1250 24th St, NW.; P.O. Box 97180; Washington, DC 20090-7180; <https://protect.worldwildlife.org/page/52883/donate/1> )

(American Brain Tumor Association; 8550 W. Bryn Mawr Ave. #550; Chicago, IL 6063; or online at <https://www.abta.org/> )

Kelly Barber of Bevis Funeral Home (850-385-2193 or [www.bevisfh.com](http://www.bevisfh.com)) is assisting the de Kloet family with their arrangements.

# Previous Events

## Celebration of Siwo's life

OCT **29**. 2:00 PM (ET)

The Retreat at Bradley's Pond  
9002 Bradley Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32309

## Reception

OCT **29**. 2:45 PM (ET)

The Retreat at Bradley's Pond  
9002 Bradley Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32309

# Tribute Wall

“ Tribute for Professor de Kloet

By Bill Brizzard

*In 1977 I was a first-year graduate student in biology at Florida State University. At that time, the Department of Biology had laboratory space in the Institute of Molecular Biophysics, IMB, (now known as the Kasha building in memory of the late Dr. Michael Kasha who founded the Institute). I began my graduate studies with Professor Kurt Hofer in his lab in the IMB and during the course of my work I frequently crossed paths with another Biology Department faculty member, Professor Siwo de Kloet. Eventually, I asked a senior graduate student about him. “He’s probably the most humane guy here,” was the reply.*

*After completing my master’s degree with Professor Hofer in 1979 I began my doctoral studies in Professor de Kloet’s lab. He was an early pioneer in the study of ribonucleic acid (RNA) and at that time the laboratory was studying RNA in the yeast, *S. cerevisiae*. The running joke in the lab was that RNA stood for “Real Nucleic Acid” as opposed to the more widely studied deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA).*

*His wife, Dineke, also worked in the lab and the couple frequently invited graduate students to their home for dinner parties (I was particularly fond of Dineke’s Dutch cooking). Their home featured the novelty of having a concrete duck pond in the backyard. This was due to Siwo’s interest in ducks and other waterfowl. In addition to his scientific pursuits, he was also an accomplished pianist and would entertain us by playing pieces from the classical repertoire (He later developed an interest in the harpsichord, built his own, and played that as well). I recall being welcomed into their home one evening for dinner during the 1980 Olympics when the 5- time gold medal winner, Eric Heiden, was skating and the de Kloets and their sons were watching with avid interest. They later decided to build a new home on the outskirts of Tallahassee that allowed more space for additional duck ponds.*

*Following their move Siwo called upon the assistance of his graduate students to help with construction of the duck ponds. My friend and fellow student, Mark Long, was especially skilled at this.*

*Over time several enclosed duck ponds were constructed and Siwo added to his collection of exotic species and began breeding them as well. His interest in birds continued and following his retirement from FSU Siwo started a business for determining their sex that eventually employed his family and grew to be what is now known as Angen.*

*We spent many hours working together in his laboratory at FSU which allowed time for conversation. Growing up on the politically conservative Gulf Coast I had not been exposed to liberal ideas. Through my conversations with Siwo, I received a philosophical education in addition to a scientific one. In 1982 I earned my Ph.D. with Professor de Kloet, and my dissertation was entitled, "Structure and Reverse Transcription of the Double-Stranded RNA of a Superkiller Yeast Strain." Over the ensuing years as I continued my career, he was always available to support me with advice and letters of recommendation. If I had to pick one word to describe him it would be humane but other words come to mind as well: teacher, mentor, and friend.*

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**Bill Brizzard** - October 27, 2023 at 12:57 PM

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*Bill, it was a fantastic time in my life to be in Dr. de Kloet's lab with you. Dr. de Kloet certainly changed both my life & my career for the better. He was always supportive, positive & helpful. I will always remember building those duck ponds!*

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**Mark Long** - October 29, 2023 at 01:33 PM



“ A grove of 3 [Memorial Trees](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Dr. Siwo Rel de Kloet.

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September 17, 2023 at 06:24 AM