

Royal decoration for Jo Hermans and Jan Schmidt

Today two of our colleagues received a royal decoration. Professor Jo Hermans became “Ridder in de Orde van Oranje Nassau”, and Professor Jan Schmidt became “Officier in de Orde van Oranje Nassau”. They receive the decoration as an acknowledgement for their extraordinary and selfless contribution to others and to society in general.



Professor Jo Hermans

As a physics professor, Professor Hermans is known for his dedication and enthusiasm. Next to his scientific work he has also been a member of the board and vice-chair of Leiden University’s Faculty of Science. But most of all is known for his teaching talent: many students remember his energetic and clear explanations, and the creative demonstrations he did. Since his retirement Professor Hermans has committed himself to popularizing science. His book “Do you hear better in the dark?” explains every day phenomena and the physics behind them, and was a great success. His second book “The energy survival guide” concerns the energy challenges that lie before us. Hermans is of the opinion that everyone who wants to join the discussion and decide on the energy challenges should understand the figures and context. He is an inspiration to young people. Through his commitment, knowledge and personality he is a great ambassador for science in general and for physics.



Professor Jan Schmidt

Today we all know Professor Schmidt as the Chair of the Governing Board of the Leiden School for Instrument Maker (LiS). Through their expertise and creativity, graduated LiS students can make about anything. They are the link between the scientist’s drawing board and new cutting-edge devices, without which a lot of scientific research would be impossible. The LiS has a unique character, but this uniqueness makes also makes it vulnerable: The school almost had to shut down because of new government policy on examination. Because of Professor Schmidt’s resolute and energetic actions the school was saved, and the Dutch government nowadays recognizes the value the LiS presents. In his 31-year long scientific career Professor Schmidt supervised 31 PhD students and at least 50 students. He received the Jacob Kistemaker Prize for his work on and the development of high frequency paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy, and for making the technique available beyond the field of physics. Professor Schmidt has been a member, vice-president and president of the Executive Board of the Foundation for Fundamental Research on Matter (FOM), and has the vice-president of the Exact Sciences Domain of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)



Royal decorations: For whom?

A Royal decoration is awarded to people who have served society in an extraordinary and selfless way. In particular the way in which they have served society is important. The focus for the decoration is on how special the awardees services have been to other people – additional to what can be reasonably expected from their position and occupation. For example people who have volunteered in an -significantly- above-average way, or to those who have committed themselves to solving societal challenges. More information about the royal decorations can be found at www.lintjes.nl (in Dutch).