Professor Bastiaan Jacob Collette, 1930–1991
In Memoriam

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Professor B. J. Collette, who was the founding editor of Marine Geophysical Researches, died last year. The following obituary was prepared by J.-C. Sibuet, J. Verhoef, and W. Roest.

Bastiaan Jacob Collette was born on October 13, 1930 in the province of North Holland, the Netherlands. He died on November 11, 1991 of a generalized cancer after a short illness and is survived by his wife and 4 children.

Bastiaan Collette started studying geology in 1946 at the Rijksuniversiteit in Utrecht and then continued in geophysics under Professor F. A. Vening Meinesz. For his Ph.D. thesis he studied the relaxation process of the negative gravity zone in West Indonesia, arriving at the conclusion that the mechanism proposed by Van Bremmelen led to unacceptable short decay times and that tectonic forces must be at work to sustain the anomalies (Collette, 1954).

In 1952 he became an assistant, and in 1954 the head-assistant of Vening Meinesz. During that period, he carried out experiments with very viscous material to study the postglacial upheaval of Scandinavia (Burgers and Collette, 1958).

In 1955 he became entrusted with a gravity survey of the North Sea, organized by the Netherlands Geodetic Commission in order to investigate the possible relation between the subsidence of the Low Countries and the upheaval of Scandinavia, in connection with the catastrophic storm surge in 1953. The investigations showed that there is no direct relation and that the gravity anomalies in the North Sea area are primarily connected with basin formation. This led to the first geophysical model of the North Sea Basin (Collette, 1960). In the same paper, he also suggested that the missing part of the Caledonian basement structures can be found on Greenland which then should have moved west as proposed by Wegener, and thus became an advocate of continental drift several years before the general break-through in geological thinking in the 1960's.

In 1962 he founded, with J. G. Scholte and W. Nieuwenkamp, the Vening Meinesz Laboratorium voor Geofysica and Geochemie. From 1964 to 1966 he conducted seismological refraction experiments in the North Sea, together with R. A. Lagaay, A. R. Ritsema, J. G. Hagedoorn and several students. As a major result, a shallow position of the MoHo-discontinuity (crustal thinning), predicted by gravity, could be demonstrated (Collette et al., 1965; 1966). Also in 1964 and 1965 he conducted the magnetic measurements program in the Navado project (HNLMS Snellius, North Atlantic Ocean). The collaboration with J. I. Ewing of the Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory led in 1965 to continuous reflection seismic measurements on board HMS Vidal on four crossings of the North Atlantic (Collette et al., 1969).

In the absence of oceanographic vessels in the Netherlands, he started in 1967 continuous seismic and magnetic profiling on board ships of the Royal Netherlands Steamship Company (Kroonvlag-project). The project was sponsored by the Office of Naval Research, the NATO Science Committee and the Netherlands Organization for Pure Scientific Research (ZWO, now NWO). In addition, funds were obtained from oil