

# Papa Ger

Who was this man Gerardus and what legacy did he leave?

Most would say he was a gentleman who knew how to get things done  
Whether mastering a project or orchestrating fun

He would stick his neck out regularly, to imitate his adopted family  
No giraffe was a stranger to him, though they're such an anomaly

He sought them on safaris and he loved them oh so well  
He worked with them quite closely, he was clearly under their spell

He was a legend with the animals who whispered "there is a papa Ger!!"  
He was a legend with the people in Orlando when he brought the World Cup so near

Living life to the utmost, he made his life a work of art  
This is more than just a metaphor as he approached everything from the heart

Van Gogh was a stranger to our museums until Ger applied his magic touch  
Bringing displays to the Smithsonian, showcasing the master and great pride of  
the Dutch

Ger, he was a Dutchman too - It was his native land  
But the world it was his oyster, everywhere he went he'd join the local band

When he came to the "New World" in 1992  
He would find the perfect partner to help him build a zoo

Theodora was the lady who would take the great man's arm  
After trading nuptials, the journey they embarked on together, just enhanced  
his charm

You could say that he adored her, you could say she was his maiden fair  
As they would explore the world together, not afraid to take a dare

He piloted their Porsche's, she piloted their planes  
As they would soar on Terra Firma and through clouds with sun and rain

They dined with Duke and Duchess's  
They were friends with rich and poor  
They shared so much with so many, declaring "this is what life is for!"

Who was this man Gerardus who came from Amsterdam?

A survivor of the German occupation when he was just a boy  
He developed a passion for living life while the soccer ball was his favorite toy

He toyed with making a career of soccer, but it's simply wasn't meant to be  
Gerardus found so many different roles to better serve humanity

We've enumerated just a few things to celebrate the great man's life  
We mustn't disappoint him, let's all hoist a glass and toast him... and hug his  
pretty wife!

Even with all the accolades, you'd probably underestimate the man  
Could the guest of honor be among-st us, his invisibility a part of his plan?

Check in front and then behind you you and know he's somewhere in the room  
Making certain that we all enjoy the festivities, this is not a time for gloom!

He's saying "celebrate with gusto and let the music play!!"  
And if you will make your life a work of art - that will make my day!

A Tribute To Gerardus  
By Jeff Tressler  
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