



# Ambassador Rudolf Bekink

Ambassador Rudolf Simon Bekink was born on Sept. 30, 1950, in Assen, a town of about 67,000 people in the northeastern part of the Netherlands.

He earned his master of arts in economy from the University of Groningen in 1974. Two years later he began working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the beginning of his diplomatic career, he worked in Athens (Greece), Luanda (Angola) and the East Asia Division of the Foreign Ministry.

From 1982-1986, Mr. Bekink served as the first secretary for the Political Department in the Embassy in Washington, D.C. covering Africa, Latin America, Europe, and protocol.

From there he became chargé d'affaires to Ghana until 1989 before taking positions as Deputy Head of Division, Ministry of Economic Affairs (1989-1990); Personnel Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1990-1992); and Deputy Head of Mission Dutch Permanent Representation to the OECD Paris, France, (1992-1997).

Mr. Bekink then served as Director of Protocol for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 1997-2000. During this time, he directed state visits to the Netherlands, including from France, Belgium and Japan.

He most recently served as the ambassador to the People's Republic of China (2008-2012) after stints as ambassador to Belgium (2004-2008) and Sweden (2000-2004).

“Ambassadors are permanently astonished,” he said. “I love to meet people who accomplish something in this world. It makes a diplomat cheer.”

He married Austin, Texas, businesswoman Gabrielle de Kuyper, in August 2011. Ambassador Bekink has three grown sons.

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His speech at the Embassy of the Netherlands, May, 2, 2015

Blessed, not just honored.

Greatest generation is clearly accurate.

Those of us who are here today love freedom. We, as individuals as a group, realize that to hold on to precious freedom, means to struggle and constant vigilance.

We also realize that you, as individuals and a group, are near the end of your time with us on this earth, That we must seize this moment for present and future to learn from you and to work with you to educate with your stories, your character and personalities, and your abilities to leave permanent evidence of the preciousness of each of you, of Rosies as a group, and, indeed, the importance of women in the future of the human family.

Today we can only show how much needs to be done – and the only way to do what we can is for us to cooperate, not just as Americans but as people who understand the preciousness of freedom. In the words of Roosevelt just after Pearl Harbor, “every man, woman and child.