

Princess Margriet

Princess Margriet is Queen Beatrix's sister. She is the third daughter of Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard. She is married to Professor Pieter van Vollenhoven and has four sons, Prince Maurits, Prince Bernhard, Prince Pieter-Christiaan and Prince Floris.

Youth

Margriet Francisca, Princess of the Netherlands, Princess of Orange-Nassau and Princess of Lippe-Biesterveld, was born in Ottawa, Canada, on 19 January 1943. The Princess is the third daughter of Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard. She has three sisters: Queen Beatrix, Princess Irene and Princess Christina.

The family had been living in Ottawa since June 1940, after the German occupation of the Netherlands. The place where Princess Margriet was born was placed temporarily outside the jurisdiction of Canadian law to ensure that she would not have dual nationality. She was named after the marguerite, the flower worn during the war as a symbol of resistance to Nazi Germany.

It was not until 2 August 1945, when the Netherlands had been liberated, that Princess Margriet first set foot on Dutch soil. Princess Juliana and Prince Bernhard returned to Soestdijk Palace in Baarn, where the family had lived before the war.

Education

Princess Margriet received her primary education at The Workshop (*De Werkplaats*), Kees Boeke's progressive school in Bilthoven, and at the Nieuwe Baarnse School in Baarn.

She completed her secondary education at the Baarns Lyceum, passing her school leaving examinations in 1961.

University

On leaving secondary school, Princess Margriet spent a year studying French literature, history and art history at the University of Montpellier. On her return to the Netherlands she enrolled at Leiden University, where she studied elementary jurisprudence, constitutional law, Roman law and some social science subjects.

Marriage and family

While studying at Leiden University, Princess Margriet met her future husband, Pieter van Vollenhoven.

Their engagement was announced on 10 March 1965, and they were married in The Hague on 10 January 1967. The Princess and her husband went to live in the right wing of Het Loo Palace in Apeldoorn. In 1975 the family moved to their present home, Het Loo House, which they had had built near the Palace.

Children

Princess Margriet and Pieter van Vollenhoven have four sons: Prince Maurits, born in 1968, Prince Bernhard, born in 1969, Prince Pieter-Christiaan, born in 1972 and Prince Floris, born in 1975.

Grandchildren

Princess Margriet and Pieter van Vollenhoven have ten grandchildren: Anna, born in 2001, Lucas, born in 2002 and Felicia, born in 2005, the children of Prince Maurits and Princess Marilène, and Isabella, born in 2002, and Samuel, born in 2004, and Benjamin, born in 2008, the children of Prince Bernhard and Princess Annette. Emma, born in 2006, Pieter, born in 2008, are the children of Prince Pieter-Christiaan and Princess

Anita. Magali, born in 2007, and Eliane, born in 2009 are the daughters of Prince Floris and Princess Aimée.

Official duties

As a member of the Royal House, Princess Margriet has many official duties. She visits companies, care institutions and institutions devoted to the arts. With Professor Pieter van Vollenhoven, she nearly always takes part in the reception of heads of state on official visits to the Netherlands. The Princess also visits many international events in which the Netherlands is taking part.

Health care

The Princess is highly active in health care and social work. She is honorary chair of the Netherlands Red Cross. From 1995 to the end of 2004 she was chair of the Standing Commission of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. In November 2005 she became a member of the Governing Board of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

She had her first practical experience of Red Cross work in 1965, when she trained as a Nursing Auxiliary First Class in a hospital in Amersfoort and on the J. Henri Dunant, a Red Cross hospital ship which takes disabled people on holiday trips. She is also patron of the National Union of Volunteers, an organisation devoted to volunteer social work.

Culture

Princess Margriet is the patron or sits on the board of various organisations in the field of the arts.

She is patron of the New York-based Netherland-America Foundation, and of the Netherlands American Amity Trust whose headquarters are in Washington. These organisations were established to cement the ties of friendship between the Netherlands and the United States.

The Princess is also a member of the Supervisory Board of Het Loo Palace Museum. As well as being patron of many organisations, she holds many other posts and honorary posts. She has also received several honorary doctorates and other distinctions.

Leisure pursuits

Princess Margriet's favourite leisure pursuits are reading, theatre, riding, skating, skiing and walking.

Like her husband, she is very interested in the culture, flora and fauna of the Arctic. They went on a tour of the national parks, and spent time with the Inuit in the north of Canada, where they travelled by dogsled. They recorded their experiences in a book published in 1980.

January 2011