



In memoriam Pierre Colaert

Pierre Colaert,
Partner and Director of Baker Tilly Belgium and the Acos Berk –
group.
Passed away on March 30, 2008 after a traffic accident.

Dear Mama and Pierre's family, friends and acquaintances, dear colleagues,
Dear Arnout and Hadewig,
Dear Anita and Daphnee and Yves,
Dear Vicky,

We are saddened, deeply saddened, by Pierre's passing. On behalf of the staff and partners of Acos Berk and Baker Tilly Belgium we would like to say a few words to you upon Pierre's untimely death - Pierre, who was not only our colleague but also our friend.

We got to know Pierre in 1995 as an independent specialist in fiscal law. At the time he had rejected a promising future as a highly qualified tax lawyer with one of the large international consulting firms in order to start out on his own. He knew that he would not continue to feel comfortable in a large and anonymous environment and therefore consciously and decisively opted for a smaller group - almost like a family.

It was in the summer of 1999, through a coincidence, that we, together with Pierre, embarked on plans to start our own independent office, young and ambitious as we were. Pierre played a leading role with respect to vision and strategy. He put our vision, mission, and the financial framework on paper in an organized and simple way. He had the exceptional talent to put plans and ideas into simple words and to motivate everyone. For Pierre could inspire others with his enthusiasm. He was also a quick decision maker. As soon as a decision was made, he threw himself into it for 100%. Thus, the plans made in the summer of 1999 became a reality as early as January 1, 2000 - the opening date of our new office with 17 employees, which today has grown to a young, enthusiastic staff of about 80.

Pierre was the driving force behind that growth - because plans are easy to make but you also need to put them into words and that was one of his strengths - on the one hand to put ideas forward and on the other hand to put it all on paper in proper format.

But with Pierre we were always looking to the future. New ideas emerged and Pierre tended to always be one or more steps ahead in order to face the ever changing future.

That's how he discovered a new challenge... the further internationalisation of our services. That's how Pierre became the contact person for our international network (Baker Tilly), including 138 independent offices in 104 countries. Within the network, Pierre is viewed as a pioneer and front runner.

He loved this challenge, to be in contact with our international colleagues, to work on the expansion of the network and the collection of knowledge, to travel to different countries.

In addition, Pierre represented our office to professional organizations, specialty publishers, and the most diverse decision makers. Averse as he was to elbowing his way through, everyone appreciated his integrity, scientific knowledge, language skills, loyalty, and vision.

In the past few days our office has received many condolences from colleagues around the world (from the chairman of our international network, as well as colleagues from our neighbouring countries to the US and other countries overseas), from clients and business contacts, and the following words keep re-appearing:

"a man who put people at ease with his laid-back approach, who had great technical know-how, and who was always ready to help with the projects of clients and the office."

The following is a quotation from one of those many expressions of sympathy, this one from a client:

*Pierre,
Like many other clients and colleagues, I will miss your expertise and knowledge. We had regular, and even irregular, fruitful meetings in which we were able to make the right decisions together. You always kept the complete picture in mind and were always thinking two steps ahead. You were a great person to work with.
Pierre, I will miss you. I wish you all the best.*

It is a characteristic of strong personalities to be able to surround themselves with an exceptionally strong team. In this too, Pierre set an example by giving his people the right amount of freedom and, despite his many forced absences, being available to them as a sounding board with his knowledge and insights.

By working together for many years we were not just colleagues but we almost became a family, friends. Pierre invited us, together with our families, to enjoy initiatives that our office will always remember: the two summer get-togethers at his house, and especially the indescribable trip to his beloved South Africa. We also spent numerous weekends together in the Ardennes, had several parties and receptions, and went to the pub for a beer after a meeting....

Working together to build a firm, it creates a bond that endures in good times and bad times. In the past year we have reconsidered our plans - because we discovered that the relationship between work and personal life was not always in balance [and that comes at a price].

Pierre's sudden passing brings us face-to-face with the painful reality that today's threshold of what is humanly tolerable in terms of professional pressure and responsibilities may be too high. Certainly if, as in Pierre's case, you take this pressure to heart, both literally and figuratively speaking.

Dear Pierre, be assured that we will carry out your vision as you would have wished. You may no longer be with us in person but you will always be one of us. We will remember you as a magnificent colleague and good friend... all the beautiful memories are indelibly printed on our minds. Your children, your mother, partners, and family can be very proud of you.

We wish to express our support to Arnout and Hadewig, we hope that you, together with Vicky, will get through this difficult period. Take good care of each other and remember that

we are always there for you. Even though your father may not always have been around as a full-time Papa, he did love you full-time. You can still count on him *on the other side*.

We also want to offer our support to Anita and her children Daphnee and Yves. Pierre had started a new life here, in this beautiful area, where now the trees are beginning to bloom. He still had so many plans... we hope that his enthusiasm will support you in these difficult times and beyond.

Our deepest sympathy, Mama and brothers and sister, Pierre's family,

Thank you Pierre.

On behalf of the partners and staff of Acos Berk and Baker Tilly Belgium group.