



Bernardus Adrianus Petrus Dobbe

November 12, 1950 - February 5, 2026

BERNARDUS "BENNO"

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Bernardus "Benno" Adrianus Petrus Dobbe beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and visionary leader in the American floral industry, passed away on February 5, 2026, the same date his beloved wife, Klazina, passed five years earlier. Benno was born November 12, 1950, in Breezand, the Netherlands. His life story is inseparable from that of his wife. He met Klazina Looij in Den Helder when he was 15 and she was 13, and from that moment on they were rarely apart. They married on December 18, 1970, beginning a 50-year partnership defined by love, resilience, loyalty, and shared vision. Their marriage stood as a model of steady devotion and unwavering commitment. In 1980, with three young children, ten suitcases, and just \$2,000, Benno and Klazina immigrated to the United States in pursuit of opportunity. They arrived with no guarantees, only determination and faith in their ability to build a better future.

One cherished family story recalls their first meeting with a banker in America. When asked what he had for collateral, Benno replied simply, "These two hands." With that declaration, their American dream began. They settled in Woodland, Washington, a community they grew to love deeply and always called home.

Soon after arriving, Benno founded Holland America Bulb Farms, growing lilies, daffodils, tulips, and iris crops he knew well from his family's farm in the Netherlands. In 1986, he expanded operations to California, establishing All Seasons Flowers in Arroyo Grande. In 2006, the businesses merged to form Holland America Flowers, a name recognized throughout the floral industry. Benno's impact on American floriculture was significant. His expertise in year-round production of Oriental and Asiatic lilies helped reshape flower farming along the West Coast. By sourcing bulbs globally and supporting domestic growers during industry shifts, he played an important role in strengthening the American floral supply chain. His influence extended from greenhouse operations in Washington and California to flower markets across the country. Beyond business, Benno was known for his remarkable storytelling. He captivated family, friends, and colleagues with vivid accounts of his childhood in the Netherlands, the early risks of building farms from the ground up, and the many adventures he and Klazina shared around the world. His stories carried humor, courage, and wisdom, reflections of a life fully lived. On July 4, 1996, one of his proudest days, Benno and Klazina became American citizens together. For a man who had crossed an ocean with little more than vision and resolve, it was a powerful full-circle moment. He believed deeply in the promise of America and embraced it wholeheartedly.

Though Benno and Klazina traveled extensively, nothing meant more to them than returning home to Woodland. Benno is survived by his daughter, Nicolette (Rob); his sons, Ben (Jen) and Stefan (Jodi); 13 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren, all of whom were a source of immense pride and joy.

He leaves behind a legacy of perseverance, innovation, generosity, and deep devotion to family. He also leaves a lasting imprint on the Woodland community, where he gave freely of his time and resources, supported local families and organizations, and contributed for decades to civic efforts including the Woodland Community Swimming Pool project. His life stands as testament to what can be built with vision, courage, and two hardworking

hands. A Memorial Service followed by a Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at Woodland High School, 1500 Dike Access Rd., Woodland, WA 98674, at 2:00 p.m.

Flower deliveries (day of service) may be sent to: C/O Benno Dobbe Memorial Service, Woodland High School, 1500 Dike Access Rd. Woodland, WA 98674

Cards may be sent to: Family of Benno Dobbe PO Box 6, Amboy, WA 98601

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Benno's honor to The Love Street Playhouse, 126 Loves Ave., Woodland, WA 98674.