

Asbestos - My war with the Devil's dust by Eric Jonckheere – Available 28th April 2022

Review by Joanne Gordon – Chair Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum

This is Eric's story of his family tragedies, a family torn apart by the asbestos company where they lived.

It is a very sad and poignant story of a family that worked, lived around and trusted the Eternit factory but who were ultimately betrayed. The Eternit factory allowed the 'devil's dust' to enter their home and claim the lives of several of his loved ones. Only Pierre Jonckheere, Eric's father worked at the factory but "*overalls continued to be taken back to the thatched cottages and washed by housewives unaware of the dangers to which they and their children were exposed.*" Children played in the contaminated area, as well as around the docks where asbestos from Canada was unloaded "*in the open, it was never closed off, and the dust billowed in the wind.*"

It is also a story of a remarkable family, a family full of love, friendship and who wanted to fight for justice for all. Despite such tragedies the family are an inspiration to all asbestos campaigners and all those fighting for the safe removal and eradication of asbestos and the devastating diseases it causes. Their bravery only further highlights the cowardice of the asbestos industry hiding behind deceit, lies, hypocrisy and pay-offs. Eric writes his family's story with compassion, emotion and raw honesty.

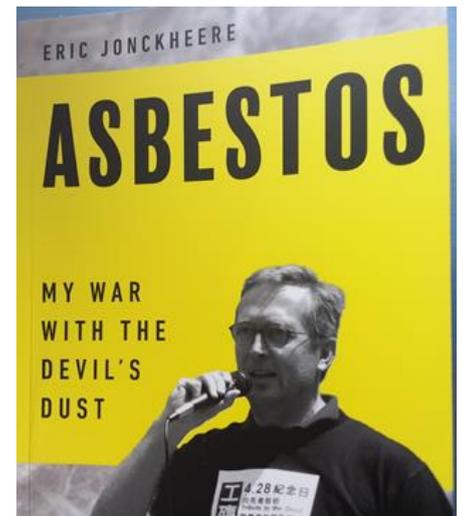
The story begins with a powerful foreword by Eric's mother, Francoise Jonckheere. Whilst suffering from mesothelioma, Francoise faced the Eternit's CEO but she refused to be bought and silenced, resulting in her '*laying the groundwork for justice*'. Francoise was also one of the founding members of ABEVA (The Association of Asbestos Victims in Belgium). The work of which, along with the fight for Justice, Eric and his brothers promised their mother they would continue.

With a Preface from International Ban Asbestos Secretariat, Laurie Kazan-Allen, friend of both Eric and the Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum, this book is an important read.

There are so many important topics discussed in this book woven around this family's tragedies. The book gives a voice to families who are living with a diagnosis of mesothelioma, facing the prospect of losing a loved one and dealing with important issues of loss and grief. For us as campaigners the story reminds us, why we are fighting, for whom we are fighting and that the fight is a global one.

Carrying the baton with Eric, we must put pressure on International asbestos killers who should be funding research to find a cure for mesothelioma, not hiding behind their veils of secrecy.

Quotes taken from Asbestos My War with the Devil's Dust by Eric Jonckheere



For a copy of the book please contact Joanne Gordon on
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