

# SFRBM Featured Woman in Science

[Yvonne Janssen-Heininger](#), Ph.D.



**Hometown:** Elsloo, The Netherlands

**Title and current institution:** Professor, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT

**Research interests:** Redox biology and the pathogenesis of fibrotic lung remodeling

**How I fell in love with biomedical research:** As an undergraduate student, in one of my classes I was challenged to identify organ sections under a microscope, and discuss potential causes of disease by performing literature searches. This is how I encountered my first lung tissue. I realized then how many questions about the causes of lung disease had remained unanswered. I started to read articles, and realized how fascinating, delicate and adaptable the lung is. Given the unique oxygen environment, a passion for redox biology was born.

**A life challenge you had to overcome:** I was not eligible for medical school, in Holland, as I was missing Chemistry as a core class in high school. My high school chemistry teacher had not encouraged me, true for numerous female students in my class. Via a difficult way, I chose to study Environmental Health Sciences, at Maastricht University, where I was exposed to biomedical research. After A-cing the required chemistry courses, I could have switched to medical school at that time, but instead I stayed the course, as I loved the research-centered curriculum. A closed door led to unexpected opportunities, especially given that my research took me to the USA!

**Best advice you have ever received:** Work on really important problems, and ask yourself what you are going to contribute to your field that has impact? This could be a new method, reagent, or drug. You do not want to always ask your colleagues for a reagent. Develop something new yourself, that will benefit others and hopefully the broader community!

**Pet peeves in science:** Stamp collecting! Lack of running controls! Commercial kits- I really cannot stand these as you give up control!

**Book or article that you would recommend:** All Nicholas Sparks novels. See below. I am not into complicated books. NY Times, Tuesday science sections.

## Three things people may not know about me:

- 1) I am incredibly un-organized in day-to day-life, forget ALL the simple details. My husband tells me that I have to wear a name tag at conferences so that I remember my own name.
- 2) I love to read novels that are simple, happy and positive, books you do not have to think about! Beachy-type novels. I cannot stand book clubs, as one should not have to analyze a book meant for pleasure.
- 3) I am a hit and-mostly-miss cook, as I never follow a recipe, and make dishes up as a go. Dinner parties at my house range from big successes to deep embarrassment.
- 4) I do judge books by their cover and wines by their label...