

11/4/88 - D.S.H.
87

GRADUATION LUNCHEON SPEECH : SATURDAY APRIL II 1987

MR CHANCELLOR AND HONOURED GUESTS, I RISE TO PROPOSE A TOAST TO OUR DISTINGUISHED HONORARY GRADUATE AND TO WELCOME OUR HONORARY GRADUAND. ALTHOUGH PROFESSOR MARGARET SMITH HAS BEEN PROPERLY 'DONE', ADVOCATE GEORGE RANDELL WILL BE MAKING HISTORY IN EAST LONDON NEXT MONTH AS THE FIRST HONORARY GRADUATE TO RECEIVE HIS DEGREE AT THE FIRST RHODES EAST LONDON GRADUATION CEREMONY. RHODES, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS HISTORY, HAS TWO OCCASIONS ON WHICH TO SING THE PRAISES OF OUR HONORARY GRADUATES, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO THE EAST LONDON CEREMONY FOR THIS REASON IN PARTICULAR.

I AM PARTICULARLY GLAD TO HAVE MARGARET SMITH AND GEORGE RANDELL WITH US TODAY. APART FROM THE FACT THAT THEY ARE BOTH OLD RHODIANS, THEY ARE ALSO PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME TO MEAN A GREAT DEAL TO THE GRAHAMSTOWN COMMUNITY, WHERE BOTH HAVE CHOSEN TO RETIRE.

2

MARGARET SMITH, AFTER A LIFE DEVOTED TO FAMILY, ICHTHYOLOGICAL RESEARCH, SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATION AND THE WELFARE OF THOSE AROUND HER, HAS COME TO A POINT IN HER PROGRESS THROUGH LIFE WHEN SHE HAS MANY MEMORIES OF CHALLENGES MET, GOALS REACHED AND HORIZONS BROADENED, AS WELL AS OF THE NUMEROUS INTERESTING PEOPLE SHE HAS MET AND WITH WHOM SHE HAS WORKED.

THE FACT THAT OUR HONORARY GRADUATE HAS NOW RETIRED FROM THE BURDENS OF LIFE AS DIRECTOR OF THE JLB SMITH INSTITUTE OF ICHTHYOLOGY DOES NOT MEAN SHE NOW SITS WITH FOLDED HANDS AND FOND MEMORIES. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MARGARET SMITH WILL EVER RELINQUISH HER PASSIONATE INTEREST IN ALL THINGS FISHY, NOR WILL SHE LOSE HER CONCERN FOR, AND ENJOYMENT OF, THE HUMAN BEINGS AROUND HER.

THROUGHOUT HER LIFE SHE HAS BEEN MOTIVATED BY HER CHRISTIAN FAITH, WHICH HAS STOOD HER IN GOOD STEAD THROUGH THE TRIALS OF RECENT SERIOUS ILLNESS. SHE ALSO HAS THE GREAT ADVANTAGE OF A WELL-DEVELOPED SENSE OF HUMOUR, OF WHICH SHE GIVES FREQUENT EVIDENCE, OFTEN AT HER OWN EXPENSE.

I AM REMINDED OF A ACERBIC VICTORIAN LADY WHO, WHEN ASKED TO COMMISERATE WITH A FRIEND ON THE DISTINCT LACK OF BEAUTY OF SAID FRIEND'S GRAND-DAUGHTER, REMARKED: "A WOMAN CAN BE FORGIVEN FOR NOT BEING A BEAUTY AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN. IF SHE IS NOT BEAUTIFUL BY THE TIME SHE IS SIXTY, HOWEVER, IT IS HER OWN FAULT".

UNFORTUNATELY, I DID NOT HAVE THE HONOUR OF KNOWING MARGARET SMITH WHEN SHE WAS SIXTEEN. EVEN HAD I MET HER, I DOUBT WHETHER MY JUDGEMENT OF FEMININE BEAUTY WOULD HAVE BEEN PARTICULARLY WELL-DEVELOPED AT THE AGE OF THREE.

I AM THEREFORE UNABLE TO SAY WITH ANY CERTAINTY WHETHER OR NOT MARGARET SMITH WAS POSSESSED OF GREAT BEAUTY AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN.

I AM ON FIRM GROUND, HOWEVER, WHEN I SAY THAT SHE NOW DISPLAYS THE BEAUTY WHICH INHABITS THE FACES OF THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED LIVES FULL OF ADVENTURE AND ENJOYMENT, WHO HAVE EXPENDED MUCH ENERGY IN THE SERVICE OF OTHERS, WHO HAVE BORNE SUFFERING AND DISAPPOINTMENT BRAVELY, WHO CONTINUE TO BE INVOLVED IN MATTERS WHICH HAVE OCCUPIED MUCH OF THEIR LIVES AND WHO TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE PEOPLE AND EVENTS AROUND THEM. OUR PERCEPTIVE VICTORIAN LADY WOULD, I AM SURE, HAVE APPROVED OF HER.

THE YEAR 1987 IS AN IMPORTANT ONE FOR MARGARET SMITH, NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS THE YEAR IN WHICH RHODES UNIVERSITY IS CONFERRING AN HONORARY DEGREE UPON HER, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT MARKS THE YEAR DURING WHICH SHE

RECEIVED THE ORDER OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE, CLASS I: GOLD, THE HIGHEST AWARD MADE TO CIVILIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

RHODES UNIVERSITY CAN CONGRATULATE ITSELF ON HAVING PRODUCED TWO SUCH DISTINGUISHED OLD RHODIANS, ONE OF WHOM WE HONOUR TODAY, THE OTHER TO WHOM WE SHALL DRINK IN FOUR WEEKS' TIME.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I ASK YOU TO RISE AND DRINK A TOAST TO "OUR HONORARY GRADUATE".

DR D S HENDERSON

APRIL 11, 1987