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Welcome Address to New Students, Wed 10 Feb 1982

It is a very great privilege and pleasure,
as Principal & Vice-Chancellor to welcome you this
afternoon as new members of Rhodes University, and
to introduce to you collectively the people on the
platform with me. They are the Vice-Principal,
the Registrars, the Deans of the various faculties, the
Dean of Students and the President of the SRC. Many
of these august personages you will be seeing more of
in the next few days, and as the academic year
gets into full swing [Collective term for Deans? ^{Pride of}
Pack of
Principals' is easy. Prize for the most imaginative
suggestion. Incantation? Secantation?]

You are the largest group of entering students in the history of the university. According to our best present estimates, of the order of 870 students coming to a university for the first time will arrive at Rhodes this year. To this should be added over 100 nfgs who will have transferred from other universities.

to introduce you collectively to the people on the platform with me.
V-P, Reg, Dean of S, Sec Pres & Deans of Faculties ^{most of whom you will}
probably see more of. — Generic term for Deans — Pride of lions, lack of priorities

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lets call them Incarnation of Deans.

It is my very great privilege and pleasure,
as Principal ~~of~~ Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University,
to welcome you this afternoon as new members
of Rhodes University. ^{and} Although this is the seventh ^{welcomed new}

^{students to Rhodes} consecutive occasion on which I have ~~performed~~ ^{performed}
that ^{I still find it a very} agreeable duty, of ^{particularly when I am} this nature it is the

first time that I have been able to do so
as the first official act of the ^{the} pre-registration
orientation week. You are also the largest
group of ^{entering} first time students in the history
of the University. ^{According to our}

best present estimates, ^{of the order of} at least ^{1,870} ^{students} ^{coming to} ^{ed} 1,000. That

you would be such an unprecedentedly large
group, only really became apparent towards
the end of October last year. Prior ~~to~~ ^{for admissions} to that
the volume of enquiries and ~~admissions~~ ^{for admissions} applications
had been running at much the same level as
the previous year or two. Some decisions about

accommodation had therefore to be made immediately.
I am happy to be able to report that as a
result of these decisions we shall, by not later than
the beginning of the second term, be able to
house 130 more students in our residences than

was the case in 1981. The capacity ~~to~~ will
in fact have been increased from just over
1700 to about 1840, an increment of some
7 1/2%, ^{Approx 33} ~~Some 50~~ of these new places will not be
available until mid-April, and so a certain of
amount of musical-chairs shuffling will be
unavoidable. I ask those of you who will be

a Univ
for the first
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Rhodes this
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experiencing a ~~certain~~^{degree} amount of inconvenience to bear this with cheerfulness and patience. After all, the only alternative would have been to have asked you not to have come at all.

Your Orientation week brochure describes a comprehensive set of variegated activities, designed to enable you to find your bearings - geographically, informationally and academically, ~~before~~ in a relatively calm atmosphere before returning students are back on campus and you are plunged with the kaleidoscope of registration, first lectures, social and sporting activities and Rag. You will learn something about the university itself, the study ~~for~~ methods, subjects offered, amenities available, and you will have a chance to reflect on whether you have really chosen the right combination of subjects. The programme represents a tremendous effort by the organising committee, both student and staff members, under the conureship of Dr. Peter Swtees. The university is most grateful to them and to the various lecturers and student helpers who have given so unstintingly of their time and energy. I have been ~~particularly~~^{particular} requested to draw your attention to one item on the programme, labelled NIPR test. It is especially important that you should ~~avoids~~ participate in these tests, only recently made available by the National Institute for Personnel Research, because they will assist us to establish, with a fair degree of accuracy, where there are serious gaps in your preparation for

a university course, particularly in the language and numeracy spheres. We shall then be in a position to identify those of you most likely to benefit from special programmes of lectures and tutorials which we hope to be in a position to initiate, ~~very shortly~~.

Let me turn now to some brief statistical data relating to the student body which you are about to join. In 1982 there will be all in all something over 3000 students, of whom about 2450 will be f.e. u/g, approx 150 at Hon level or equivalent and the rest p/g or special students. Geographically, Rhodes has a wider spread than almost any other Univ, certainly than any metropolitan Univ. These latter tend to draw 75% or more of the student body from the immediate environment. At Rhodes

33 ~~33~~ % EC

10 ~~15~~ % Rest of CP

24 ~~22~~ % Tol

15 ~~15~~ % Zimb

9 % ~~Noted~~

+ smaller % ages from OFs, ~~Noted~~, Namibia and elsewhere.

This diversity of geographical origin, and family and school background is one of the characteristic features of Rhodes. You will get to know and make friends with a great variety of people, and this is an education in itself.

Although 3000 students is very small by university standards, it is large in comparison with any High School. You will also find the University far less supportive than most schools, even though there are many people able

and willing to help you — Wardens, lecturers, admin staff, Deans of Students and the like. Perhaps the chief difference is that, although there are a myriad of academic, social, sporting and other activities going on there is very little external pressure, ^{very largely} compelling you to participate. You are expected to take responsibility ~~for~~ ~~for~~ yourself for the decisions you take and the tasks you set yourself. The key to successful achievement in any aspect of life is discipline and dedication, but at Varsity you are expected to supply these yourself. It can be very disconcerting until you get used to it. You will ultimately be held to account for your academic success, or lack thereof, and ^{for} your responsible handling of relationships with the other sex, of drink and of avoidance of even more toxic substances with which you might unwisely be tempted to experiment.

There is one other statistic upon which I should like to comment. Many of you will have come here with some specific profession or calling very much in mind be it Pharmacy, Journalism, the Law, ^{Accountancy} or Teaching to name some obvious examples. Others do not have a particular career so sharply in focus but through a general curriculum they hope to prepare themselves in some way for an interesting career. At Rhodes the breakdown between these two general categories is approximately 60/40. Be that as it may there is one fundamental question, the implications of which we should use the

time we have here to give some thought to. The question is "Do we live in order to earn a living or" ~~Do~~ "we earn a living in order to live"? Surely to pose the question is surely to opt for the second alternatively. Is it not then paradoxical that we shall probably be spending a great deal of energy in the business of preparing ourselves to earn a living? What about preparing ourselves to live? The trouble about posing questions such as this is that it immediately opens a Pandora's box of further difficult questions. Before thinking about preparing ourselves to live we find ourselves speculating about what constitutes the good life. What about the lives himself? What is the nature of man and his relationship with the society he must live in (unless he is Robinson Crusoe or a hermit)? What is man? A child of God, a rational animal, a featherless biped, a naked ape or simply a fortuitous concourse of atoms? The answer we choose for this question determines very largely how we consider it legitimate to behave towards each other, and ~~also~~ whether the individual is paramount vis-a-vis society or the other way around. Is society merely a chance ~~fortuitous~~ collection of individuals, like a Saturday morning shopping crowd or is it like a beehive or anthill where the individual is of no account in the life of the whole? What about something in between, say a giant orchestra in which there is structure and ~~disciplined~~ authority but also in which each individual and his contribution is important?

Feminists
~~blame~~
 take us to
 task,
man
 member of
 the
 "species
 "homo
 sapiens
 sapiens"
 not a
 male vs
 female
 "homo" vs
 "vir"

like this

Of course, ever since recorded history began philosophers have been posing ~~this type of~~ questions and religious leaders have been propagating answers. No obvious consensus has been reached. One understandable reaction is simply to dismiss the whole business as being tiresome. But surely not to worry your way through ~~this type of~~ these questions at least once in your life is to deny an important part of your very humanity. What better time of life ^{these} is than vanity to re-examine your own perhaps naive and unarticulated views ~~reg~~ in this field?

Apart from the few statistics I have given you I do not intend to go into any further detail about the university you have chosen to attend, since this is the subject of a complete talk to-morrow. Let me say a few words rather about the community ~~of~~ ⁱⁿ which it is ~~now~~ situated. As I mentioned earlier, Rhodes has no natural metropolitan hinterland, instead it finds itself an integral part of a rather isolated and proud little city. If you are ~~visiting~~ ^{seeing} Grahamstown for the first time in 1982 it is rather hard to imagine that for a good portion of the 19th C it was the most important community in South Africa after Cape Town. A substantial amount of South Africa's history of the last century was made here in the Eastern Cape. People ~~are~~ ^{tend to be} very historically minded ^{these}. When they talk about the Sixties or Seventies they are not necessarily referring to the 1960's or 1970's but quite possibly to the 1860's or 1870's. You

will find buildings both on the Campus and ~~the~~ in the City that date back to almost 170 years, cheek by jowl with neighbours only a few years old. You will find it interesting and well worth your while to visit some of the museums, churches and other historic buildings and to absorb some of the unique human and architectural atmosphere of Grahamstown. It would be a great pity if you were to spend three or four years here and let all of this pass you by.

It is a truism that South Africa is a microcosm of the world in that the First World meets the Third World within the boundaries of one country. Equally apparent is that Grahamstown is a microcosm of South Africa. Stark and obvious contrasts are to be seen and experienced within the confines of one city, all of which is visible from the 1820 Monument on Gwyfne Hill.

In line with this theme of preparing ourselves for living as well as for earning a living it would also be a great pity if you were not to take full advantage of the many opportunities available to you of gaining a broader perspective. During the year there ~~are~~ ^{will be} many ^{occasions} ~~opportunities~~ on which to ^{listen to} ~~attend~~ talks by prominent speakers (some included in your Orientation Week programme), to participate in sports and society activities, to attend concerts, plays, films, art exhibitions or to visit neighbouring places of historic or scenic interest. There is such a spectrum of varied and interesting extramural activities that surely you will find some that are to your taste.

I am not going to complete my welcome to you by wishing you luck in your studies and other endeavours, because your success will depend only marginally on luck and almost entirely on good management, especially of that most precious of resources, time. It is amazing how swiftly time slips by and therefore there is none of it to waste. I know that Rudyard Kipling is somewhat out of fashion as a poet these days, but he put the issue very concisely in this verse from one of his best known poems:-

"If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!"

Rather, I shall conclude my remarks by stating categorically and so all sincerely the following three propositions

1. We are pleased to have you all here at Rhodes
2. We have no doubt whatever that you will ^{be happy here} enjoy yourselves
3. The vast majority are going to profit by being here.

God bless you. and thank you for your attention