



RHODES UNIVERSITY

GRADUATION 1989

on
FRIDAY, 7 APRIL
AND
SATURDAY 8 APRIL
at
1820 Settlers National Monument
and
SATURDAY, 13 MAY
at
Guild Theatre, East London

At the ceremony in Grahamstown on Friday evening, 7 April, degrees were awarded to students in the faculties of Science, Social Science, Commerce and Pharmacy. The degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Robin Plumbidge and Professor Theodoor van Wijk, who were presented to the Chancellor, Dr Ian Mackenzie, by the Public Orator, Professor Rodney Davenport, Head of the Department of History. The congregation was addressed by the Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University, Dr Derek Henderson.

Students in the faculties of Arts, Education, Divinity and Law received their degrees on Saturday morning, 8 April. The graduation address was delivered by the British Ambassador to South Africa, His Excellency, Sir Robin Renwick. The degree of Doctor of Literature (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Vernon Forbes and the degree of Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) was conferred upon Dr Noel Williams.

The Vice-Chancellor's garden party was held on Saturday afternoon on the St Peter's lawns, beside the University Chapel of St Mary and All the Angels.

The East London Division of Rhodes held its third Graduation ceremony in the Guild Theatre on Saturday, 13 May. At the gathering 38 students were capped by the Chancellor, Dr Ian Mackenzie. The congregation was addressed by Dr Basil Hersov, a member of the Board of Governors and Chairman of Anglovaal Limited.

After the ceremony, a luncheon was held in the Courtenay-Latimer Hall in the East London Museum with music provided by the Rhodes Jazz Ensemble, led by Professor Norbert Nowotny, Head of the Department of Music and Musicology at Rhodes.

AIM FOR EXCELLENCE

Dr Derek Henderson, Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University, delivered the address at the Graduation ceremony on Friday evening, 7 April. He said that Rhodes could justifiably be proud of the great number of Rhodians to have risen to the pinnacles of their profession.

GRADUATION 1989

A total of 963 undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates were awarded at the Graduation ceremonies in Grahamstown in April. This number includes 21 Doctoral degrees and 69 Master's degrees. Undergraduate degrees were awarded to 519 students and 132 students received diplomas and certificates.

The Faculty of Arts had 261 students graduating with Bachelor's degrees, and the number of honours degrees awarded rose from 82 last year to 90 this year. Thirty Master's degrees and 12 PhD degrees were awarded, as well as six graduate diplomas and 25 postgraduate diplomas.

The Faculty of Education awarded the first nine BPrim Ed degrees, 21 Bachelor of Education degrees, 55 graduate diplomas and 16 non-graduate diplomas. Eleven Master of Education degrees and one PhD were also awarded.

In the Faculty of Divinity, three Bachelor of Theology degrees, three Honours degrees and one Master of Theology degree were conferred, together with two Bachelor of Divinity degrees.

The Faculty of Social Science awarded 41 undergraduate degrees, 8 Honours degrees and 2 Master's degrees. One non-graduate diploma was also awarded.

The Faculty of Law awarded 22 Bachelor of Law degrees and two BProc degrees.

In the Faculty of Science, 78 Bachelor's degrees and 59 Honours degrees were awarded, together with 22 Master of Science degrees and six PhD degrees.

The Faculty of Commerce awarded 78 undergraduate degrees, 18 Honours degrees and two Master of Commerce degrees. Two non-graduate Certificates and twenty seven graduate Certificates were also awarded.

The Faculty of Pharmacy awarded one PhD degree, one Master of Science degree and 47 Bachelor of Pharmacy degrees.

Mr Chancellor, Mr Mayor, Distinguished guests, Members of Council, Colleagues, Graduands and Diplomands, Ladies and Gentlemen. My first and most pleasant duty this evening is to welcome you to the 1989 Graduation exercises. At Rhodes University we take pride in the way in which we conduct our graduation weekend, and we strive mightily to attend to every detail. This external observance is not a superficial matter: it is symptomatic of an inner attitude of aiming for excellence. It has truly been said that concern with small matters is itself no small matter.

Tonight and tomorrow morning and again in East London during May, Mr Chancellor, you will in aggregate be conferring degrees and granting diplomas and certificates to no fewer than 975 candidates. The magic figure of 1000 continues tantalisingly to elude us, but it is now clearly within sight. A noteworthy feature this year is that we have a record number of twenty-one doctoral candidates from a wide variety of disciplines. We have indeed come a long way since the award of the first PhD degree ever in 1937. A full third of a century after the founding of Rhodes University College. More generally, the graduands present tonight can take heart from the proud record of those who have gone before them. The number of Rhodians who have risen to the pinnacles of their professions is quite astonishing, considering the small base from which they sprang. Too numerous to mention by name, one naturally turns one's mind on an occasion such as this to the Managing Directors, Judges, Bishops, Distinguished academics, Authors, Actors and School Principals, to name some examples, who have sprung from our fertile soil. There can be no doubt that some of tonight's candidates will emulate their predecessors.

Academics our lifeblood

We can therefore be justifiably proud of our traditions and sound scholarship. No small measure of the credit is due to the industry and dedication of our academic staff. Precisely because we rely on them so heavily as our very lifeblood, there is on occasion alarm and despondency when we lose key people who become Heads of Department, Deans, Registrars, even Vice-Principals or a Principal at other Universities. In reality we should view such migrations as a feather in our caps, in that our staff, both academic and administrative, are

in such keen demand elsewhere. Such movements should be regarded as a very specialized component of our vocation as an educational institution.

There is of course the obvious danger for a small university of the resulting vacancies not being capable of being filled. We have so far, however, nearly always found it possible to fill the gaps with thoroughly worthwhile people. They rapidly become imbued with the Rhodes ethos and rise magnificently to the occasion. And so the cycle continues. This is in fact as it should be. It provides new insights, and gives a practical demonstration that nobody is indispensable (not even the Vice-Chancellor).

Pure dedication

Tonight, as your programme indicates, we honour graduands from the faculties of science, commerce, social science and pharmacy. It is not obvious what they have in common, besides being non-arts subjects. Perhaps we may be able to tease out some comparisons and contrasts by examining certain paradigms or patterns by means of which various aspects of knowledge are commonly viewed. Difficulties and confusions arise when inappropriate paradigms are applied to the subject matter of a particular discipline.

Probably the oldest paradigm available to us is one of pure deduction. A basic set of axioms is taken as given, and not open to enquiry. From this set of givens new knowledge is derived solely by deduction, without reference to empirical data. Such reasoning is particularly appropriate to theology and mathematics. In the former the axioms are a corpus of revelation, not subject to questioning except for elucidation by the man of faith. In the latter the axioms are somewhat arbitrary, and in principle open to choice by the mathematician. Once selected, however, the mathematician thinks very little more about them, but busies himself by demonstrating what theorems flow from them. Some interesting questions do remain. For example, are there any redundant axioms, in that it may be possible to prove one axiom as a theorem derivable from the others? Alternatively is it possible to prove the negation of one axiom from the others? In this event the set of axioms would be inconsistent. These questions are worthy of study in their own right, but they are essentially secondary to the main enterprise.

Observable phenomena

When we enter the arena of observable phenomena the simplest knowledge paradigm is that of taxonomy, or the process of collecting, collating and classifying the available data. The data may be so voluminous as to defy within the present level of understanding, any deeper structural level of analysis. This type of knowledge, though incomplete, is not to be despised. It has a long and honorable history. Even today it continues to be practised extensively in certain subjects, and it has frequently been a prerequisite to an ultimately deeper understanding.

A third paradigm is the now revered hypothetico-deductive system common to most sciences. Facts are observed, and attempts are made to cover the widest spectrum of phenomena with the most comprehensive theory, or deductive system. Scientific theories almost always predict new phenomena not yet observed. Experiments are devised to test the resulting predictions. If the phenomena as actually observed do not conform to the predictions the scientist regards it as an inescapable duty to "save the phenomena", to use the original phraseology. The theory rather than the facts must be modified or abandoned, and another iteration of the cycle is attempted.

Success of Science

The spectacular success of science over the last 400 years or so is in large part to be attributed to its abandonment of the first paradigm and the now universal adoption of the third. Before the advent of figures like Copernicus and Galileo science was mostly composed of the untested dicta of such luminaries as Aristotle. "Heavy bodies fall faster than light ones" and "nature abhors a vacuum" are two famous examples. The first was no longer tenable after Galileo's experiments from the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The abhorrence of vacuum only extended as far as the pressure exerted by a column of mercury approximately 76 cms high, a discovery due to Galileo's pupil Torricelli. From such humble beginnings the huge edifice of science as we know it today arose, its history littered with the corpses of theories which did not save the phenomena.

Application of the method to the economic and social sciences has not been so successful, substantially because the situations studied are complicated by the inordinate number of variables and the vagaries of human decision making, which is frequently an integral part of the area of discourse. Nonetheless considerable pro-

gress has been recorded during the last hundred years. Regrettably some social theorists, daunted no doubt by the complexities, have regressed to the dogmatism of the first paradigm described above. A noteworthy case is that of Karl Marx, who resolutely refused at all to observe any empirical facts at first hand. In spite of exhortations from his friend and benefactor Friedrich Engels, Marx did not once visit a mill, a factory or a mine, to study for himself the working lives of the oppressed proletariat about whom he theorised so prolifically. Today the experimental consequences of his theory have perforce been experienced. At horrendous and incalculable cost in human misery. We now have the virtual acknowledgement by even the most ardent practitioners that the theory has failed, and they are busy dismantling it with what dignity they can muster. What irony it is that certain third world leaders remain intoxicated with the dream.

Theories lack attention

The third world has indeed suffered more than most sections of humanity at the hands of development theoreticians and their critics, whether of the left or right. The common fault of these theories is their lack of attention to empirical observation. On the other hand a man whose work has excited much attention recently is Hernando De Soto of Peru. Like his illustrious namesake of the sixteenth century De Soto is something of an explorer and adventurer. The original De Soto, after enriching himself during the conquest of Peru, went on to explore much of what is now the South-eastern United States, becoming the first European to cross the Mississippi. The latterday De Soto has become an explorer of the poor. His book "The Other Path: The Informal Revolution" is a shining example of empirical method. He would hardly enjoy that adjective, though, because his work is in opposition to the shining path or sendero luminoso of revolutionary notoriety. In his own words he "set out to understand how and why things really work, not to find and fit facts to predispositions of ideology and dogma".

His conclusions, based on painstaking observation, are both surprising and encouraging. He finds, for example, that Government action and existing economic systems place huge hurdles in the way of grassroots entrepreneurship, a vital force in circumstances where 50 - 60 percent of all jobs are in the informal sector. In spite of all obstacles the entrepreneurs survive. In Lima he states that 70 percent of all housing is erected illegally, while for the very poor the figure is 98

percent. Ninety-five percent of all public transport is informal. He and his colleagues counted 90 000 street vendors served from hundreds of street markets erected by former vendors. He quotes the incredible obstacles to be negotiated before legal housing can be erected, a process requiring visits to 52 Government Departments and the completion of 207 forms, enough work to occupy a lawyer for seven years. Are there not familiar resonances to South Africans in all of this?

20th century viability

De Soto's prescription is that democracy, providing a feedback mechanism as to what people actually want, and a market economy are the only path which demonstrates viability under 20th century conditions. This view flows from strictly pragmatic tests of what works. Ordinary people are much more intelligent and responsible than they are given credit for. They want the myriad of regulations removed, but not to be replaced by no law. Laws protecting property rights and enforcing contracts are seen to be of central importance, he avers.

De Soto's work is of such significance because of its adherence to scientific method, and consequent lack of reliance on axiomatic dogmatism. He holds out real hope for the third world poor, and thus his book is of great interest not only to Latin America, where it has become a best seller, but also to Africa, and more particularly South Africa.

No matter what you have studied during your years at Rhodes it has obvious applications right here and now. A few examples might be illustrative. Social scientists could absorb the spirit of De Soto's work and adjust it to our own circumstances. Scientists and pharmacists could apply "little science" rather than "big science" which could lead to an appropriate technology germane to the solution of small problems whose characteristics are that cost rather than "state-of-the-art" efficiency is a major criterion. Commerce students could give increased attention to what kinds of small businesses are successful and equally importantly, to what does not work. A fine illustration of technology and business combining is the imaginative solution of pay-as-you-go coin boxes to meet the costs of reticulated electricity, rather than the drastic disconnection of power as a consequence of unpaid bills.

We are entering an exciting rather than a dismal phase of South Africa's development. Many doom-sayers picture us all being dragged down to a third world level of common shared

misery. Who better than South Africa to show that such a fate is not the only possible outcome? Perhaps when that task begins to show positive results those of our political divergences which are driven by fear on the one side and frustration on the other may begin to appear manageable after all. These factors at present form a significant facet of our political stalemate.

Adventure lies ahead

Sometimes I feel glad to belong to

an older generation. It means that others are going to have to solve our seemingly intractable problems. At other times I wish I were young enough to be sitting at the back of this auditorium, and so be able more effectively to participate in the great adventure which lies ahead. You have all that before you. What a time to be setting out on the journey of life when the first grey streaks of dawn signal the beginning of the end of the dark night of the soul and the hegemony of apartheid! The smell of hope is in the air. Even the

storm clouds seem to have lifted a little.

In your choice of career take advantage of this new mood. Do not let self-aggrandizement swallow you up completely: leave a little room for service to others. You will then be a credit both to your family and your alma mater.

You go out from here with our blessings ringing in your ears. Get on with the job.

A GRIM KIND OF HISTORY

In his address at the Graduation ceremony on Saturday morning, 8 April, the British Ambassador, Sir Robin Renwick, KDMG warned the graduates that this country could not afford to perceive its problems as insoluble.

It is a very considerable honour to be asked to deliver the address at the graduation ceremony of this historic university. It is customary on these occasions to try to offer some advice to the graduating students. Of course I know that you will not take much notice of it – certainly no more than I did of those who spoke to me on similar occasions in the past.

The first piece of advice I would offer you is that if you are ever called upon to make a speech, as I am obliged to do today, you should not imagine that many members of your audience have actually come to hear whatever it is you have to say. That is a mistake speakers commonly make and it is a very bad one. Winston Churchill, who was accustomed to addressing gatherings even larger than this one, always used to advise speakers never to forget that, if they were going to be hanged, the crowd would be twice as big. That at least is good advice and I would urge you to bear it in mind.

As I can still remember my own graduation, I also am conscious that to all of you I must appear extremely old. In my own eyes, of course, I like to think of myself as still quite young, reasonably fit and vigorous. But to any graduating student, I must certainly appear decrepit, hastening towards the grave and altogether out of date.

I am not one of those who sets great store by the supposed wisdom that comes to one with age. It took a Frenchman, Chamfort, to point out that as we grow older we flatter ourselves that we are giving up our vices. But in fact what is happening of course is that our vices are giving us up. I intend to go on clinging to mine!

Searching for a subject that might be of some interest to you, I thought I

might try to reply to the question often asked of me – namely, what on earth is it that Ambassadors actually do? This, of course, is a difficult question. There is a good deal that is better left unsaid!

Changes affect all

I also want to draw your attention to changes in the world around you which certainly are going to affect all your lives.

I spent last week-end with my Prime Minister in Namibia. Some of you will know it well. It is a fascinating country, of harsh but extraordinary beauty. There are not much more than one million Namibians, but they are a tough and resilient people. History is being made there and at the moment it is history of a particularly grim kind.

Namibia was one of the world's last colonial problems. As is usually the case in this and other parts of the world, we played our part in helping to create the problem. Of late we have been playing our part in trying to help get it resolved.

After ten years of painful and difficult negotiations, of innumerable setbacks and disappointments, an agreement was reached that should lead to internationally supervised elections in which all parties can participate and all Namibians can vote; and that in turn should lead to internationally recognised independence for Namibia. We worked hard to contribute to that outcome. But the main credit, without doubt, must go to Dr Chester Crocker. Many doubted if he would ever get there. Others poured scorn on his efforts and stated with certainty that they would never succeed. He was at one moment or another reviled by all the parties. But he displayed a combination of qualities that brought success in the end and which are indispensable to any negotiator. They are energy, imagination and above all, staying power. And that is

what is required in dealing with the complex problems of this region. They cannot be solved overnight. But nor can they be evaded. We and others have campaigned for years for a Namibia settlement. We have campaigned for years for the release of Mandela; and we will go on campaigning until he is released.

Difficult task

Negotiating the Namibia agreement was an immensely difficult task and I would like to pay tribute to the efforts of your delegation and especially its leader, Neil Van Heerden. Having been through a similar experience ourselves in Rhodesia, however, we knew from the outset that implementing it would be more difficult still. Those expectations have been well and truly fulfilled. Nine days ago, on 31 March, Namibia was at peace. There had been no bomb explosions, no major incidents for months. The UN forces were deploying. People's thoughts were on the forthcoming elections.

Twenty-four hours later, the situation had changed. By then it was clear that armed groups were crossing the Angolan border in considerable numbers. In the Orwellian world in which we live, a remarkable number of people sought initially to contest this. It is difficult for some to believe that those they hold in high esteem should act so foolishly. We have, nevertheless, to face the unpleasant truth that they did.

The tragic absurdity is that those who have most to lose from these events – after the people of Namibia themselves – are those who are most confident that they have popular support. Who stands to lose most from a failure to get to the free elections to which we and the rest of the international community are pledged, and towards which we have worked so hard?



Dr Noel Williams about to receive his hood from Dr Hunt.



Professor Vernon Forbes receives his hood from Dr Hunt.

Does this mean that all hope for peace is lost? Not in my view. Mrs Thatcher spent most of her day in Windhoek shoring the agreement up and resisting unilateral actions which would finally have undone it. As a result we have emerged with the framework of the agreement at least still intact. And that is important, for what is needed now is to get back to it. For the objective has not changed.

Cease-fire negotiations

It is free elections, on the basis of one man, one vote - elections, in which all parties can participate. The only way we can get back to that is for all the parties to comply with the terms of the agreement. That means that the forces that came across the border will have to go back, or hand over their arms; that SWAPO forces must be north of the 16th parallel, under monitoring; that those who wish to return to Namibia must do so as civilians; and that, the fighting ended, South African forces also must return to their bases, under monitoring.

More urgently still, we have to work out the terms of the cease-fire. Nearly 300 people have been killed in the past eight days. That cannot be permitted to continue. Efforts are going on in Windhoek today to work out the terms of a cease-fire which would save a great many lives. We have been in touch with all the parties and have relayed a great many messages between those who concluded these agreements in the first place - South Africans, Cubans, Russians and Angolans. There is, I believe, a genuine desire on the part of the governments principally involved to rescue the settlement and try to make it work. There is a great deal at stake.

If that can be done, and the process completed successfully, what difference will that make? Well certainly it will make an enormous difference to the people of northern Namibia, who have suffered and are suffering so severely from the war. And I hope that it will make a difference to the people of Angola - though that will depend on further steps towards internal peace, or at the least a cease-fire, being taken there. For South Africa it would afford some time and space to try to make progress with solutions to your own problems and that could be very important - provided the time and space are used. To all of you who are of military age, it would mean that you would not be serving on the Angolan Border, or on the other side of it; and while I do not doubt your patriotism and willingness to fight for your country if threatened, I imagine that some of you at least would prefer to do so closer to home.

Minority protection

Namibia is not a "problem", but a country. My Prime Minister made it clear once again the other day that we are indeed believers in one man, one vote - though not in "winner takes all" and no protection for minorities. If we were to believe the rhetoric, we might be forgiven for believing that "liberation" equals salvation. It does not, as the history of a large part of this continent bears witness.

The church, or at any rate most of it, always has had the wisdom never to pretend that Utopia is likely to be achieved on this earth. Those who believe in secular religions do make that mistake and the consequences generally have been grisly. If the present crisis can be overcome - and that at the moment still is a big if - what the future holds for Namibia will depend on what the future elected government does; on whether they will seek to pursue a policy of reconciliation, which is going to be every bit as necessary in Namibia as in Angola; whether they will turn out to be bent on making all over again the mistakes that have destroyed other African economies; or whether they will learn from others' experience in which case there will indeed be some hope for its future.

I have one or two more things to say.

First I would like you to reflect for a moment on the likely situation of this country by the time all of you will be about as old as me. The population of South Africa today is 37 million and the rate of increase before long will be one million a year.

The population of Durban is over 3.6 million now. By the end of the century it will have doubled. The projections for Cape Town are similar.

Socio-economic changes

It is not going to be possible to build formal housing on anything like the scale required. We are talking about a further vast increase in the number of shack dwellers.

My friend, Stanley Uys, wrote recently about the vast socio-economic changes taking place in this country. Those who are in any doubt should try shopping in central Johannesburg on a Saturday. Apartheid visibly is breaking down in the cities. Changes in the legislation continue to follow rather than to lead these changes in society.

On the remaining pillars of the apartheid society - the Group Areas Act, the racial classification of every South African at birth, the Land Acts - you know our position, which is that they should be abolished. There has been of late a whiff of "glasnost" in the

air and any steps in that direction will be welcomed. These laws, it is argued, cannot be abolished, overnight - and certainly are not going to be.

But in the face of the great social and demographic changes I have described, does anyone seriously believe that they can be maintained? It is simply not going to be possible to deal with the problems of urbanisation on this scale on the basis of the old divisions and restrictions; or to educate the mass of people on the basis of segregated school systems. If land is not made available, it will simply be occupied, as we have seen already. In cold economic terms, the maintenance of apartheid will be simply unaffordable and South Africa is indeed going to have to adapt or die. As for the apprentice sorcerers who believe, Canute-like, that this tide somehow can be turned, we have already seen them standing in Boksburg in the water up to their waists. Professor Carel Boshoff has pointed out that continued domination of the majority is practically and morally unsustainable. The fact that it is morally unsustainable is not new and has not until recently caused it to be disavowed. That it is practically unsustainable you are going to have the chance to witness for yourselves.

Values threatened

In doing so I would urge you, as over Namibia, to bear in mind that whatever political changes take place - and in relation to what exists today you are going to live through a sort of revolution - beware of millenarian visions. The problems of this country are going to be difficult for ANY government to deal with.

The values that are threatened today are going to be threatened as severely then. And it will be just as important to defend them.

This country's glory has been its ability to produce some outstanding men and women who have sought to defend those fundamental values - against all comers. Censorship is not a lesser evil if those exercising it have changed places with their oppressors. Detention without trial is no more acceptable in other countries of this continent than it is in South Africa. Do not bend over backwards on these matters; for if you do, you will live to regret it.

Fought apartheid

I will conclude by quoting the words of Alan Paton, whose name will be honoured long after that of many others will have been forgotten.

Alan Paton fought harder against

apartheid than almost anyone. He was implacable in his determination to see this unjust system brought to an end.

But he was never one of those who believed that the struggle is more important than the truth.

Addressing shortly before he died, when he was 84 years old, the boys of Michaelhouse, Alan Paton said that the most important question that concerns any student is: "What am I going to do with my life?" To the very great majority of you politics is not, thank goodness, going to be the most important thing in your lives – though you are going to find that in this of all countries, you are not going to be able to live your lives untouched by politics in the future, any more than you can today.

Alan Paton recalled that, when he grew up, he knew nothing of this country's problems. "We never talked about them..... Most of us didn't know that there were any problems". Today, he said, not one of you can leave university without knowing that you are going into a world, many of whose problems must seem unsolvable.

You live in a country whose future is unpredictable. "The great plan of racial separation is falling to pieces about our ears". You are going into a world where conquest is going to have to be undone because the majority, the black people of this country, are not going to behave like conquered people any more.

Beware of fatalism

More and more white South Africans realise that their position of near exclusive privilege is going to have to be given up; and that the alternative is worse. Alan Paton saw the future not as easy, but as the road that "winds up hill all the way". If he were here today he would add, I am sure, another thought. Beware of fatalism. No country can afford to find its problems unsolvable. Why is it that this country attracts such a fierce loyalty on the part of both black and white South Africans? Why is it that so many out-

siders care so passionately about what happens here? I have to tell you that I view with some suspicion the passionate feelings of those who have never been here; but to those of us who are here, and who do care just as passionately as they do, the future does not have to be a downward spiral towards violence and more conflict. The alternative to violence is negotiation and that alternative never is more needed that when violence is increasing or taking place.

There are many here who realise that and others will come to do so. It is in large measure your generation that will decide the future of this country. That future will be very different from the present. It is our job to try to ensure that you are not confronted with an impossible task. Nothing can ever be achieved by anyone who does not believe that they can succeed. You can succeed both in your own lives and in working out solutions to this country's problems; and we are determined to go on working to give you the chance to do so.

ECONOMY CAN BE BOOSTED

In his address at the East London Graduation ceremony on Saturday May 13, Dr Basil Hersov, Chairman of Anglovaal Limited and a member of the Board of Governors suggested that forward planning and adequate training of both technical and academic staff would boost the East London economy.

Moss gas spin-offs

I am sure that you all know that this campus of Rhodes University is only eight years old. Those years have not all been good ones for this area because of the immediate past political and economic troubles. Yet it seems to me that East London has moved quite rapidly from being one of the hot spots of political unrest to one, which if not exactly full of camaraderie, is at least now relatively free of tension. This is more than can be said for some other areas – even today. But I nevertheless feel that something is lacking here. There is a stillness, an inertia, and this is what I'd like to address today.

Most will agree that there is a limit to what a community can do to build up its local economy by drawing solely on its own internal resources. Fortunately, however, for this region there is something called Moss gas. The eventual spin-offs from this massive project for the whole seaboard must be tremendous, but very little seems to have percolated through to businesses here as yet, the few contracts or sub-contracts awarded having been relatively small.

Artisan shortage

To some degree, I suppose, the blame can be laid at the door of local industry as it has perhaps not been aggressive enough nor sufficiently competitive in seeking Moss gas tenders. However, in fairness, too, it seems to be clear that some of the reasons for this are: the critical shortage of artisans; productivity is not good enough to allow keen tendering; and there is a lack of suitably qualified people who can be rapidly trained to fill various skilled and semi-skilled vacuums.

Let us consider the artisan position. The calls on this category of skills by Moss gas itself and by major contractors have been so great that they have created a country-wide shortage. Faced with this situation, these businesses have taken the easy way out and, in fact offered 'bribes' in the form of considerably higher rates of pay – and what is more, they have met with a fair degree of success so far. However, other employers are now forced to retaliate by granting not insubstantial pay offers well in advance of the annual wage negotiations between employer bodies (such as SEIFSA) and the various trade unions. Naturally, this has impacted on this area as elsewhere and, incidentally, it will also impact on inflation unless we can provide the necessary skilled manpower to fill the gap, as well as ensuring that there are productivity

improvements to match the pay increases! Both of these aspects are difficult to manage in the short-term.

It seems to me that the role of the apprentice artisan in the economy is often down-played. There is almost an in-built resistance to this form of education, often, I am sorry to say, unconsciously encouraged by academics. It is also a pity that, although you have a very good Technical College in East London, there is no Technikon in the city. So anyone wanting to achieve 'T' levels has to leave the area – and is then unlikely to return. This reduces the local population and further weakens the local economy. However, some measure of relief will be forthcoming in 1991 when the Ciskei's Technikon at Zwelitsha is moved to Fort Jackson.

Equally important

At this juncture, I must say that I believe that a technical education can be just as important and fulfilling from a career point of view as an academic education. The main difference between them is that the former is generally regarded (especially in the early years) as a "hands-on" route and often, quite wrongly, regarded as inferior. I can assure you that as far as the Anglovaal Group is concerned – and we have more than 200 companies and 85 000 employees – there are men occupying the top chairs in both our mining and industrial divisions who

have come up from both sides of the educational spectrum.

The skills shortage can be met in the medium term and even the short-term, to some degree, by job fragmentation combined with on-the-job training until such time as the educational institutions manage to meet the demands for more skilled people. However, the trade unions resist these moves, as they perceive them as a threat to their control over these artisan trades.

A compounding factor is also the pressure created by the population explosion – which certainly doesn't augur well insofar as average per capita income increases are concerned, unless productivity is raised in both the public and private sectors.

Goodness only knows what can be done about the former. Year after year we have our "civil servants" – and I remind you that that is what they are, civil servants – from the State President downwards, telling us how they are going to limit individual departmental budgets, reduce staff complements, streamline the whole civil service, freeze salaries and the like. Yet, from where I stand, I have not witnessed any of those promises being fulfilled. Rather, the opposite has tended to occur, at vast cost to the taxpayer.

Tough image

The private sector is not entirely blameless. Although it has increased productivity in many cases, there is still room for improvement. Unfortunately, the introduction of some of these measures tends to give us a tough image. When the local bus boycott started, employers initially reacted with sympathy by allowing workers to arrive late and depart without imposing any penalties. But productivity suffered, economic pressures inevitably made themselves felt and employers had to treat the situation in line with normal absence procedures.

If a company is forced to close because it is losing money, its function as a job provider, its contribution to the local economy, its support of "X" number of families and its contributions to social services are lost forever. This point is often overlooked – perhaps sometimes deliberately – by unions and agitators alike.

It seems to me that local industry has adopted a progressive approach and has started tackling the productivity barriers. It must if it is to retain any competitive edge at all. Unfortunately, its distance from the major national markets is a serious disadvantage, although decentralization incentives have helped to some degree.

In this regard, we must thank the Border Metropolitan Development Corporation, which was funded by the local city council. This organization really is a credit to the area, establishing as it has, 40 or 50 different projects which have taken some three and a half to four thousand unemployed off the streets, and, most importantly, each such male, or female, worker in turn supports eight or 10 other people.

Another facet of the whole productivity problem lies in the general under-utilization of capital. One solution to this would be to follow the example set by industrialized nations throughout the world where capital equipment is being utilized on a three-shift system for 24 hours a day, or at least for two-thirds of the day on a two-shift system.

Multi-shifts vital

On the other hand, we in South Africa still mainly run extremely expensive plants and equipment on a single-shift structure, with some notable exceptions such as the iron and steel, ferro-alloy and glass industries where the furnaces and molten metals or glass can never be allowed to cool down. Generally, however, most plant is under-utilized. In addition to offsetting the high capital cost of plant – which is more often than not imported in the first place at very high rand prices due to our weak rand – a multi-shift practice would substantially increase employment in many of our industries. Furthermore, because the same equipment is used more efficiently, it would reduce the cost of providing additional job opportunities as well as lowering unit production costs.

I am aware that this pre-supposes a market for such additional manufactures, but if there isn't a local one, then we have to look to exports (and that won't exactly harm the balance of payments). I am also aware that some local look-ahead companies in the region have already set their eyes firmly on foreign markets. The three- or double-shift system could well attract business from other parts of the country and would certainly boost the area – an area which is an important one in terms of the South African economy as a whole.

It is up to those of you who are local businessmen to grasp and develop the opportunities that are being offered, especially those at the moment by Moss gas. But you should also be looking down the road to the time when the contract opportunities from this source will dry up, start preparing now to put plans into place that will ensure that increase in business tempo continues once the spin-offs from

Moss gas cease.

To this end, once businesses are geared up to meet Moss gas and other local contracts, they should immediately start seeking ways and means of eventually using the increased capacity to feed national markets and exporting into overseas areas.

I know this is not as easy as it sounds, because one cannot just expect those markets to welcome such business with open arms; but it does need careful research and planning now, and a lot of hard work and frustrating rejections.

Harbour facilities under-utilized

Government should also be prepared to play its part. East London already has good and well-established road, rail, air and sea links, a vast pool of labour and good power supplies. The harbour facilities are extremely good, but grossly under-utilized. Should the harbour fail in the economic sense, then the outlook for the whole area would become very depressing and the ripples from this would affect the whole country.

So what could government do? Well, perhaps it could declare the area a free port. Better still, why not a free economic industrial zone? This may not attract as much attention from those short-sighted proponents of sanctions, yet the benefits it could bring by way of streamlined labour laws, relaxed building regulations, duty exemptions and the like could be prodigious. The concentration of support services alone could be self-generating and lead to significant economies of scale.

Everyone knows the political boundaries of the East London area, but in reality, there is one area economically – namely the greater area incorporating the Ciskei. Perhaps commerce and industry should be co-operating to exploit the entire area's potential and bring pressure to bear on the authorities for the creation of this free industrial economic zone. The boost to business and the surge in employment that would stem from such a move could be very significant. Meanwhile, production of – and aid to – the informal sector, even if only by way of local deregulation, would be positive steps in the right direction.

The increased development that would stem from a free industrial economic zone would obviously lift employment. However, there would still be a need for one manager for every 20 or so skilled and 50 unskilled individuals. So even though the work opportunities may be there, the necessary managerial manpower



Dr Robin Plumbridge with the Registrar, Dr Keith Hunt at graduation.



Professor Theo van Wijk being capped by the Chancellor, Dr Ian Mackenzie.

would have to be in place to make full use of these opportunities.

Top management shortfall

Recent forecasts indicate that job openings at the skilled manpower level will exceed supply by no less than half a million within the next decade. Between now and the turn of the century, there is likely to be at least a 100 000-man shortfall in the top management category unless there is a massive surge in graduates from universities, business schools and colleges. Similarly, there will probably be a shortfall of more than 400 000 professional and technical people in the same time span.

Lower down the skills grading, the shortfall becomes less acute: in the middle level (that is standard 7 or 8 who have been exposed to additional training) the short-fall will only be about 5 000. However, we then get the cross-over: at the bottom level, where there has not been sufficient education, at our present rate of development only about one million new jobs will be created by the year 2000, yet that particular labour category will have increased by almost four times that figure. This is a tragedy in the making unless we can take positive action now.

Many of the productivity problems that we are facing country-wide would not have arisen in the first place if a sound basic and secondary education had been made available to the majority of our peoples. The private sector could then have played a far greater role than has been the case insofar as tertiary education is concerned, instead of having to spread its resources over the whole educational field.

Education equals productivity

And so we come back to education as the creator of future managers, as the stepping-stone to improving productivity at all levels – from unskilled to skilled – and the key to the looming unemployment crisis.

I am not alone when I say that, despite the increasing amounts budgeted for black education, there is growing concern about the state of education in the country – and the East London area is no exception.

One of the basic shortfalls in the field of education is the poor standard of teachers in many – mostly black – junior and high schools. Private enterprise could really give a hand here by, for example, helping to establish an upgrading centre for teachers, or a teacher training centre, or simply by improving basic training facilities at

the schools. The student material is there and is willing, but it lacks the mental and physical support necessary to bring it to its peak. One of Anglovaal's projects aimed specifically at correcting this deficiency was the establishment of the English Language Centre in Durban. This upgrades the teaching ability of English language teachers in Kwa-Zulu and Natal, thereby improving the communication and learning abilities of their pupils.

Now I appreciate that Rhodes produces graduates of high standing in this area. But with the paucity of jobs here, these people generally have to seek employment befitting their education elsewhere. This causes some resentment, as many of them would prefer to remain in this area. I am aware that the recent Transkei/Ciskei conflict has also eroded business confidence but I think this is something that can well be put behind us now. Indeed, I am told that some local industries have started launching expansion programmes once again.

Outreach programmes

Those businesses are also active in the field of on-the-job training to help increase productivity, but this could be extended to help families as well by using facilities more fully for adult education. I think I am right in saying that this particular campus offers the use of its facilities for such purposes whenever those facilities are not being used by the registered students. This is a practice that could be introduced by all the local schools as well – "Outreach programmes" even companies could use their facilities.

There is a teacher shortage, so let's support the University and Chamber of Industries in their efforts to increase the number of local BCom and BED graduates – moves that will not only strengthen East London's business core, but will also increase its teaching fraternity and raise the standard of teaching.

If education and training for all had been on a par with the standard achieved by whites hitherto, neither the public nor the private sectors would have been faced with the current, and very real, problem of finding people to fill the growing numbers of vacant positions in the skilled, supervisory and management brackets. And this, I believe, would have – and still could – remove much of the resentment that is evident within the population groups that are not well represented at those enhanced levels.

Furthermore, we would not be faced with as many of the productivity short-comings as we are at present: many of the constraints to job ad-

vancement would be non-existent, and many discriminatory practices and other barriers to progress that we have witnessed in the past would have been neutralized. It is all very well to remove discriminatory barriers, but if nothing is seen to be changing, then what has really been achieved?

Keep youth here

There is also the task of encouraging the younger generation to remain in this area. In view of the problems that you have faced in the immediate past, it is understandable to a degree that they move to places where there are not only jobs, but which offer a wider scope of employment and which are more settled in the political sense. Now how do we tackle this?

Apart from the opportunities which could be created by the formation of a free economic industrial zone, there are several other avenues: business must recruit more actively in the high schools and develop programmes that outline the advantages – both by way of the range of job opportunities and career advancement potential – that pertain to this area.

Meanwhile the University and Technical College should try to expand the degrees and technical courses offered to meet the area's needs, thereby encouraging up and coming generations to remain here and take advantage of this specialized education. Business can also help in this sphere by offering tied bursaries and scholarships.

Impressive record

In this regard, I am very impressed with the growth and past record of this campus. When it opened in 1981, there were only 50 students comprising purely articles clerks who were studying for their CAs. Today, there are almost 300 students and this campus of the University offers two degree courses and has introduced Business Administration (Honours) and Psychology II – the latter as part of the BCom.

Insofar as educational achievements are concerned, East London provided the best overall Rhodes BCom student – a notable success – while the pass rate for those who sat the examination in first-year courses was in the high 70s, for second-year courses, 70 percent and third-year courses 70 plus percent. These figures are comparable with other South African campuses.

It is my fervent hope that all the educational institutions in the area, including Fort Hare, will continue to

expand the courses they offer – especially those directed towards the needs of the area insofar as higher technical degrees and diplomas are concerned. The Minister of Education and Culture has seen fit to curb undergraduate numbers at all South African universities and at Rhodes University the growth rate has been restricted to one percent. This will mean that the universities now have to be more selective in the quality of students they admit, the objective of the exercise being to reduce the wastage caused by drop-outs who are not able to cope with the standards of achievement required by university education. This restriction must be turned to positive account by the development of adequate Technikon facilities in East London.

It is the responsibility of the local community to encourage expansion. As I have mentioned already, businesses could well fund additional facilities and encourage employees and their families to further their education through part-time study. Such moves, combined with the tied bursaries I have already mentioned, will help to stabilize further graduates in local business.

Once this has been achieved, it should become self-generating because educated people will either branch out into their own businesses, or develop their employers' businesses by creating opportunities for expansion, thus creating new jobs and widening the scope for advancement of employees at all levels.

Finally, I would like to congratulate

late the graduands who are to receive their degrees today. I hope you will use your new abilities to contribute to the solution of the many problems we face in our country. I would also like to thank you, the sponsors of the bursaries that made some of these degree awards possible. But my special congratulations must go to the families of the graduands, without whose encouragement and support these young people would not be being honoured today.

In conclusion, Mr Chancellor, congratulations to you, to the Vice-Chancellor, to the Director of the East London Division and to your academic and administrative staff for the tremendous work you are all doing here. Finally, my best wishes for the future well-being of this extended campus of Rhodes University.

CITATIONS BY THE PUBLIC ORATOR

PROF T R H DAVENPORT

Before receiving their degrees, the honorary graduands were presented to the Chancellor, Dr I Mackenzie, by Prof Davenport. The text of the citations follows.

VERNON SIEGFRIED FORBES

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour to present

Vernon Siegfried Forbes

Emeritus Professor of Geography of Rhodes University, and a leading expert on the early travellers in Southern Africa.

Vernon Forbes, the son of a Congregational Minister and a school teacher from Cape Town, both of whom died when he was quite young, was born in Rondebosch in 1905. After completing his schooling, he took a job in the Standard Bank. But his guardian, who had sent two of his own sons to Cambridge, was able to arrange a place for Vernon as well, so in 1925 Vernon set off, working his way as far as Genoa on a cattle boat.

As a member of Christ's College, Forbes obtained firsts in both parts of the Geography tripos. His first article, on 'The Moon and Radioactivity', appeared in both the *Geological Magazine* and the annual report of the Smithsonian Institute in 1927. He was invited in the same year to join the expedition of Gino Watkins to Spitzbergen in the Arctic as a surveyor.

There they made the first recorded crossing of Edge Island. When not engaged in triangulating, Forbes was clearly the heart and soul of the party, especially after the landing at Tromsø in Norway ("God, how ugly the girls are" he is reported to have said; but this did not stop our candidate from entertaining these ducklings with an exhibition of the Charleston in his pyjamas, to the accompaniment of 'Boer tunes' on the mouth organ). But then Forbes always dances for exercise.

Two years later Forbes went on the Cambridge University expedition to eastern Greenland, led by James Wordie. They climbed Mount Petermann, then the highest known Arctic peak, crossing Disa Glacier – which was named, of course, by the Capetonian in the party. Before leaving America, he also took part in Sir William Grenfell's expeditions to Newfoundland.

In the meantime, his interests in geology had developed further. These led him to enroll for undergraduate courses at Berkeley, for which he had obtained a scholarship. On his return to Britain during the depression in 1931, it was a demonstratorship in Geography that he was offered at Cambridge, but turned it down. There was no opening in geology, however, so he returned to Cape Town and did an

intensive course in determinative mineralogy at UCT. This was followed by nine months as an overseer in a gold mine at Hartley in Southern Rhodesia. Nor were his wanderings over yet, for in 1933 he was appointed Vice-Principal of the Rajkumar College in the Central Provinces of India, responsible for the training of the sons of princes, and combined these duties with examining roles in the University of Nagpur and the Punjab civil service.

As one might expect, Forbes travelled in India – to Kashmir, Simla, Rajputana, Bengal, Madras; and further afield to Ceylon and Singapore; to Australia and New Zealand (for winter sports), and to the Dutch East Indies. It was at Bali, while returning to India from Australia, that he met Kit Arnold, a Londoner who had worked as a teacher in Alberta, and was returning to Britain from the antipodes as companion to an elderly lady of means. It was a lightning romance. She cancelled the rest of her passage, and they were married in India. In the course of a happy married life she bore him two sons and two daughters, who are well represented I understand on this occasion.

The Forbes family left India in 1941, and in the following year their association with the Rhodes Geography Department began. This was the renewal of a partnership with Pro-



Graduation 1989 was an historic occasion for the Geography Department as all four heads since 1944 were present. Seen here at the Garden Party were, from left, Professor Colin Lewis, the present head of department, Professor John Daniel (1971 - 1988), Professor Vernon Forbes (1966 - 1970), Professor Jack Rennie (1944 - 1965) and Professor Ron Davies, of the University of Cape Town, who was a student under both Professors Rennie and Forbes.

fessor Jack Rennie which had started, so the record tells us, 'in the year 1920 A.D.' when two Rondebosch schoolboys set off on a 'Geological and Archaeological Expedition to a Certain Valley near the Sand Mountain, Fishoek', and discovered the 'remains of certain large animals', large quantities of petrified wood, and the telltale signs of a kitchen midden. (I gather this schoolboy record in Forbes' juvenile hand, is to have place of honour in the forthcoming departmental jubilee publication). In 1962, Forbes succeeded Rennie in the Chair of Geography.

And it was from his days at Rhodes that Forbes developed his interest in the early Cape travellers, taking every opportunity to visit British archives during his periodic overseas leaves. The basis for this work was laid through articles placed at regular intervals in key periodicals, from the 1940s. A thesis, subtitled 'A Geographical Commentary upon Routes, Records, Observations and Opinions contained in Selected Documents concerning Travel at the Cape, 1750-1800', earned him a PhD in 1958. He then consolidated his research in a succession of published editions of the works of the travellers, starting with his *Pioneer Travellers of South Africa* in 1965. Five volumes in the Van Riebeeck series followed, two on George Thompson (1967 and 1968), two on Anders Sparrman (1975 and 1977), and Carl Thunberg (1986).

Paterson's Cape Travels, edited in association with John Rourke, was put out by the Brenthurst Press in 1980 and he's still active.

Forbes has always enjoyed walking. In a farewell speech to the University on his retirement, he calculated that his thrice-daily jaunt between his office and Hare Street for twenty-six years had in effect taken him round the world. But his was nothing by comparison with the way he covered the routes of the travellers, identifying landmarks, and agonising when they eluded him, checking their observations against modern knowledge and paying tribute in his published works to the cartography of Barrow, or the scientific accuracy of Thunberg, puzzling over the Khoikhoi river names in Sparrman, and hammering – but oh, so charitably – the scientific unreliability of le Vaillant ('It is regrettable, 'he wrote that he did not realize how enduringly his reputation would have stood if only he had been content to set down the simple truth of all he saw and did').

Dennis Fair and Ron Davies, both professors of Geography, have testified in glowing terms to Forbes' meticulous scholarship, the one referring to his 'high level of academic energy (and) intellect', the other describing him as 'the most distinguished historical geographer to have been produced in this country'. If, at times, his texts seem over-edited, this is merely to say he possesses the occu-

pational strength of a devoted antiquarian, concerned not to omit anything of conceivable importance with regard to the subject matter of his text, the provenance of the document, and the identity, where relevant, of its translator. These qualities lead one to hope that the diary which he has kept for a lifetime will one day inspire a volume on his own travels.

Vernon Forbes is a man of character to whom stories cling. Many are linked to wheels. Thus he recalls a precarious motor-cycle ride with the famous explorer, Sir Vivian Fuchs, through a winding village near Cambridge, when the VF in the saddle went into a skid and the VF on the pillion got up in a dazed condition from the other side of the road (but I do not recall which VF was which). His son Nigel tells a sad and rather obvious story about an inconsiderate tree. Davies recalls a 'rather splendid Nash', which Forbes had plastered with 'printed labels instructing users on the proper use of components'. Others have noted not his tyres, but his attire, as a man 'always well dressed in a manner... natty rather than sartorial... dark coloured shirts, good contrasting ties, ... and a jaunty hat worn at an angle (as his school cap was worn in years gone by), and a well swung walking stick'.

Mr Chancellor, for all these reasons, the human and the academic, I request you to confer on Vernon Siegfried Forbes an honorary Doctorate of Literature, the bonnet to be worn entirely as he wishes.

ROBIN ALLAN PLUMBRIDGE

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour to present

Robin Allan Plumbridge,

Chairman of Gold Fields South Africa, Ltd.

Robin Plumbridge was born in Cape Town in 1935, and went to St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, where he became head boy of Armstrong House, and distinguished himself on the sports field. Then, after first attending the University of Cape Town, he was elected as a St Andrews Rhodes scholar. This success took him to Trinity College, Oxford, where he read Mathematics, in 1954.

Plumbridge's praise-singer has no easy task, not because the excellence is not there, but because it is as hard to mine as the gold which he produces. One needs a touch of Little Jack Horner's table manners (without, of course, the complacency of that impossible child) to bring into focus the specific contributions of a man who is said to shun the limelight. So let it be said that he has earned the respect and confidence of those with whom he works, and to have made very important personal contributions to the mining and marketing of gold, and to public welfare in various ways, and to the welfare of this University in particular.

On his return to South Africa in 1957, Plumbridge joined Gold Fields of South Africa, and rose step by step to the position of chairman in 1980. As one of the youngest men ever to become chairman of a major mining house, with a specialization in gold, he then had to assume control over base metal operations where pioneering work had been done by others, notably in the development of the fabulously rich Black Mountain; but he made his mark in this field too by the successful promotion of electrolytic zinc refining, which broke South Africa's dependence on overseas processing of this metal.

But his main contribution to the mining industry has been in the marketing of gold as a commercial investment. He took over after the promotion of gold's monetary role in the 1960s had suffered a setback from the International Monetary Fund's introduction of special drawing rights as an alternative to gold-based currencies. The gold producers were forced to make a careful survey of the destiny of the gold they mined, and were surprised to learn that even more gold was finding its way into jewellery year by year than was produced by the South African mines. Plumbridge, who took

part in the De Kock Commission of Inquiry into the Monetary System in 1978-85, as well as serving on the Economic Advisory Council of the Prime Minister, and later the State President, used his influence in these bodies, and on the Gold Producer's Committee of the Chamber, to promote the minting of gold coinage as a commercial investment. The outcome of his efforts as mediated through the activities of the International Gold Corporation as the Kruger Rand. He took the chair of Intergold when it first met in Geneva, and under his guidance the Kruger Rand achieved huge successes on the South African and world markets, and the price of gold began to soar when people realized its commercial possibilities. Only recently, on account of the appearance of competitive gold coins minted elsewhere, and embargoes on the sale of Kruger Rands in some countries as a consequence of the sanctions campaign against South Africa, has the success of the policy been significantly checked.

It was hardly surprising, in view of these successes, that Plumbridge should have been elected President of the Chamber of Mines in 1973-74, when he was a leading member of the Gold Producers' Committee, and again in 1976-77. He has been described by John Lang, the Chamber's historian, as 'one of the great Chamber presidents of the post-war years'.

As a leading executive in the mining industry, Plumbridge has had to involve himself in all aspects of the business. This has necessarily included labour relations, a field in which his own company has maintained a strict, somewhat conservative policy which it defends on the ground that wages have to be market-related, and that workers have to be company servants first and union members second. But be that as it may, our honorary graduand has established a reputation for his 'persistent, cool and endlessly patient handling of trade union negotiations'. A similar comment can be made on the testimony of several of his managerial colleagues in Gold Fields, about the way he handles his administrative staff. He is reputed to be as good a judge of people, and as watchful of their performance, as he is of the market.

In another important respect, Gold Fields embarked on a new area of activity following Plumbridge's election as chairman. In the words of Michael de Kock, who currently holds the Public Affairs portfolio in the Gold Fields Foundation, he 'set in motion and guided a major review of Social Responsibility Programme of the Gold Fields Group', the body which was set up to give effect to the new policy. All companies controlled by

Gold Fields of South Africa were assessed according to a percentage of their wage roll and of their consolidated pre-tax profits, and the funds thus generated have been used for the promotion of educational and other projects.

Rhodes University, for example, has benefitted from the gift of the Gold Fields Library Collection, from the funding of its Information Processing degree course, and more recently from the provision of Gold Fields House in the Kimberley Hall complex. This means, of course, that today we are also expressing our gratitude to the Group, as well as honouring its chairman.

But let us not, on that account, underrate Robin Plumbridge the man, and Robin Plumbridge the friend of Rhodes, as distinct from Plumbridge the mining magnate. In view of his very heavy career involvement, it is good to know about his secure marriage to Celia Ann Millar. They have four children and I am told that their home has always been a magnet for young people and I think some of them are here tonight. Of a retiring disposition Robin may be; but fiercely competitive he is too, not merely in the cut and thrust of mining politics (which is not an understatement to those of us who read newspapers) but in the vegetable market at Plettenberg Bay, where he bids for cabbages as if he were in Hollard Street. He has been a rugby and cricket blue, and I am told that his will to win makes him a menace on the squash court. It was therefore wise of Rhodes to have befriended rather than alienated such a man, especially as we never had the chance to mould him in his formative years. We did even better to secure his services as investment adviser on our board of governors, on which he has served for a decade.

With some alacrity, therefore, Mr Chancellor, may I urge you to confer on Robin Allan Plumbridge a degree which will link him with our university community for as long as we can arrange, the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

THEODOOR VAN WIJK

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour to present

Theodoor van Wijk,

Old Rhodian, and retired Principal of the University of South Africa.

Theo van Wijk, is one of six children of a dominee of the N.G. Kerk who came from the Western Cape and married into the well-known Murray family of Graaff-Reinet. A very suc-

successful school career in Franschoek led Theo to an Arts degree at our own English-speaking University with distinctions in History and German. His mentors discovered that Van Wijk was not only a master of the English language, but also an artist in calligraphy – a skill he has taken trouble to preserve. We may add dramatic skills too, for the *Rhodian* contains a flattering appraisal of his performance as Boumeester Solness in the Afrikaans version of Ibsen's *Master Builder*, by no less a critic than W E G Louw. Van Wijk later told his wife, Cilna, that a successful executive must be something of an actor.

In 1939 Van Wijk was chosen to set up a government archive in South-West Africa, with the help of two convicts and a vintage typewriter. Appropriately, he also started his MA thesis on self-government in German South-West Africa; but wartime economies in the public service sent him back to Rhodes with the closure of that particular job, to take an education diploma, which, like his MA, was earned with distinction. In 1945 Van Wijk became a temporary lecturer in History, and this student's fading memory recalls with gratitude a mercifully straightforward introduction to historiography and the thoughts and influence of Leopold von Ranke.

Yet Theo van Wijk, who appeared to have a historian's career mapped

out for him, decided to make history rather than write it. This followed ultimately from his appointment to the Department of External Studies at UNISA in 1948. Starting as a lecturer in History, he moved through the ranks to become professor in 1961. The deanship of Arts and Social Science followed later, and the Acting Principalship in 1969.

Then, in 1972, this well-loved and well-respected scholar, combining in his person the qualities of astute scholarship, cultural breadth and humanity in ample measure, was elected Rector of the University in a contest for which some desired a different result. But he demonstrated in the following sixteen years that any other person in his shoes would have been hard-pressed to equate, let alone improve upon his record.

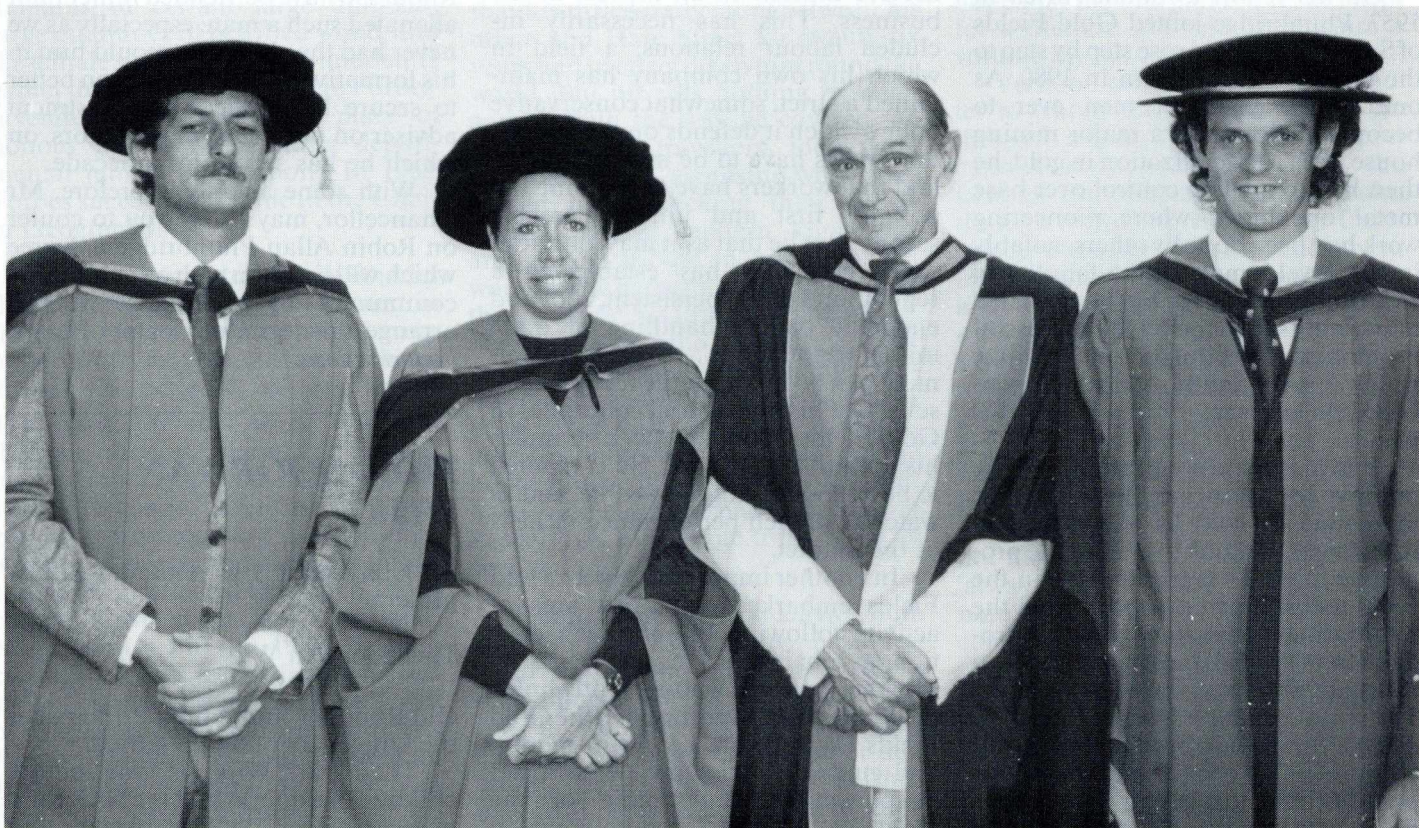
Let us start with the tribute of a chemistry professor, who is grateful for Van Wijk's appreciation of the difficulties experienced by his scientific colleagues. "As an intellectual," wrote this professor, "he always gave priority to academic matters (and) ... academic standards, considering a university to be made up of people rather than buildings, departments or courses". I think we must therefore assume that he was tied up with more important matters while the university's architects were closing the Fountain's gap with the largest sewing-machine look-alike ever built – I am

told with adverse effects on Pretoria's weather!

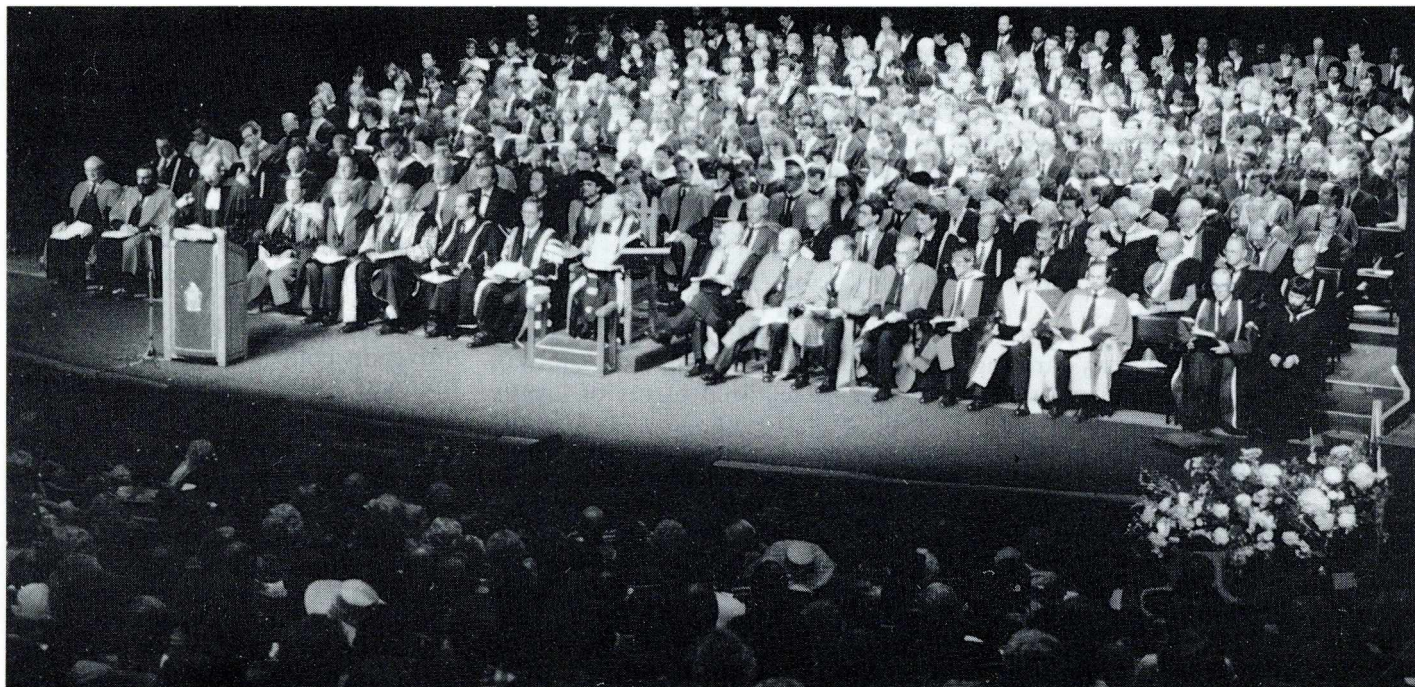
His approachability was legendary, and his door "always open" – how fitting, in Paul Kruger's capital city! A student wrote to him in 1978: "I want to thank you for all the trouble you went to on Wednesday in making special arrangements for my exams. I realise your time is very precious In spite of this you treat each student as a person", and that, I happen to know, was typical. So how many students were there to qualify potentially for such consideration? By his retirement at the end of last year, the numbers at UNISA had burgeoned during his days as Rector from 29 289 to the massive figure of 99 416.

A cricketer might look at these statistics and say 'Bad luck!' but many of us at Rhodes will probably shake our heads and wonder what this reckless empire-building has to do with higher education. So let our graduand explain himself through some of the speeches which his university has seen fit to publish. They range right across the spectrum of academic concern.

On matters of academic freedom, and speaking as head of an institution which offers an equal educational experience to persons of every creed, colour and conviction, he comes across as possibly controversial, but principled, reflective and strong. Consider the way he has wrestled with the problem of segregated versus inte-



Professor Dreyer Kruger, second from right, with three of his students who graduated with doctoral degrees at this year's graduation ceremony. The graduates are, from left, Dr Mark Thorpe, Dr Jacqueline Watts and Dr Roger Brooke.



Prof Calvin Cook, Dean of Divinity, offering the opening prayer at the Saturday morning graduation ceremony.

grated institutions: "Is it separateness which is wrong", he once asked, "or is it inequality and discrimination?" This from an Afrikaans-speaking Rhodes graduate who is convinced that 'to be wholesome and effective, education must be bedded in and nourished by the life and consciousness of a community'. Many have agonised over this dilemma. Van Wijk brought it into the open.

A conference of university principals in Bologna in 1970 enabled Van Wijk to focus on the educational realities of the mounting economic crisis, when higher education had to learn that governments were really starting to demand value for money. As he saw it, 'institutions which had been engaged in elite education had to ... exchange the ivory tower for the market place'. And yet if higher education had to be found for the masses, it did not follow that the universities had to supply it all. They had to remain training centres for a particular kind of talent, dedicated to 'the advanced study of the humanities and the pure sciences' and to the training of 'the whole person' both intellectually and in attitudes 'affective, religious, social and aesthetic'.

At Madrid thirteen years later, Van Wijk turned his attention to ways of feeding the needs of the intellectual masses with 'distance education'. Elsewhere in the world television university had come to stay. There were twenty-eight of them in China alone, catering to the needs of half a million students. So how could South Africa fail at least to expand, her own university teaching by correspondence courses when television was still kept from us?

Our candidate was not merely acquiescing in this new development. A mood of excitement runs through his recorded utterances, and he delighted in UNISA's growth. But we also have to remember that he was a graduate of a residential university where he had learnt the merits of the small tutorial as a focus of learning. A humanist in his training, he had not lost a sense of the role of elitism in higher education. Therefore, while he stressed the usefulness of gadgetry in the propagation of knowledge, he was also insistent that academics should resist the temptation to become primarily technicians, or to rate computer literacy above language proficiency.

One can heave, I think, a sigh of great relief that the task of pioneering the expansion of South Africa's tertiary education was in the hands of a scholar who was not in danger of losing his sense of academic direction. Therefore, Mr Chancellor, I ask you please to confer on Theodoor van Wijk, Old Rhodian, scholar, administrator, educational statesman and on top of this - as his wife has privately insisted - family man, the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.

NOEL ARTHUR FRANCIS WILLIAMS

Mr Chancellor, I have the honour to present

Noel Arthur Francis Williams,
entrepreneur, sportsman, Zimbab-

wean patriot, benefactor and Old Rhodian.

'Bob' Williams, as he is generally known, was born on Christmas Day 1916, in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, and attended school at Ruzawi and later St Andrew's College, Grahams-town (1930-33). At Rhodes University College in 1934-37 he became secretary of the SRC. He also excelled in nearly every available sport involving the use of boot, ball, bat, stick, racket, oar and glove. But I have it from the mouth of his contemporaries, who include a bishop, a judge, a professor and an innocent first-year student who later became his wife, that he impressed himself on their memories chiefly as chairman of the 'Assass'. This was the unofficial reception committee for first-year students, set up to lubricate the transition from school to university life. My consultants saw him variously as a concert organizer, an ogre, and a holy man who delighted in making first-years pray for rain in the early hours of the morning, and then making sure that their prayers were answered - by the bucketful.

After graduating in law, Williams left for Magdalen College, Oxford, as a Rhodesian Rhodes Scholar, in 1938. There he read English under the tutorial guidance of the renowned C S Lewis, whom he remembers still with affection. But Oxford proved to be an incomplete experience, with his hopes of a rugby blue thwarted by a broken leg, and his hopes of obtaining his degree dashed by the outbreak of the war.

Williams was in uniform from November 1939 to December 1945. After enlisting in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, he served in mine-

sweepers, corvettes and destroyers in many theatres between European waters and the Far East. He had an action-full and dangerous war, which included terrifying experiences during the evacuation from Dunkirk and in the Bay of Bengal. But he was able to take shore leave to marry Marise Mulligan, an ex-Rhodes SRC colleague, so love and war were not completely divorced.

After the war, Williams returned home to take part in family farming enterprises connected with dairying, tobacco, maize and cotton. But in 1973 he launched out into a variety of businesses, relating mainly to the manufacture of steel products and rock-crushing.

As a businessman with many irons in the fire, he nevertheless found time to promote Rhodesian sport, and Rhodesian education, and to play an important part in politics. As Chairman of the National Sports Centres Governing Body in 1964-76, he was responsible for the building of the Bob Williams Sports Stadium. This might sound like self-advertisement, especially as Williams had by this time made his name as a hockey player who represented Rhodesia between 1946 and 1949. But Muriel Rosin, who knew him mainly from his political activities, recalls the effort which he put into this venture. Our candidate has himself told me that it took him fifteen years of irritating negotiation to get the land transferred. An indoor stadium capable of seating 10 000 people was the eventual outcome, and it was funded by private subscriptions. The stadium was open to all races. It has provided a venue, among other occasions, for Davis Cup tennis. After ZANU's take-over of power the complex was further enlarged, and renamed the Harare Sports Stadium (not the 'Bob Mugabe' Stadium as some hoped, so that two men who respected each other might be jointly honoured).

His interest in public life also took Bob Williams into politics, initially as chairman of the Rhodesia Party, which was formed after the break-up of the Federation. In this capacity he chaired many rowdy public meetings, handling the sometimes vigorous behaviour of the rival Rhodesia Front hecklers with calm and skill – and no doubt a reserve of physical energy should its use have become necessary. After the landslide victory of the Rhodesia Front, when the Rhodesia Party decided to dissolve itself (a decision which Williams regretted), he was then elected chairman of a new Rhodesia Constitutional Association, which was set up to oppose any attempt to go for unilateral independence. The Association eventually merged with the Centre Party. A friend has recalled the wonderful way in which "Bob"

supported the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, when he and Lady Gibbs were 'virtual prisoners in Government House', seeing to it that they were provided with money, means of communication with the outside world, and help over their shopping and other needs! This bears out in full the independent recollections of another Southern Rhodesian who also had close associations with Rhodes University. A supporter who could stand his ground under such conditions required plenty of loyalty and plenty of guts.

The other chief area in which Williams made his mark was in the field of private education. The headmaster of Peterhouse School, which opened its doors in 1955, has described how, in the year that Williams became chairman of the executive committee, it decided to open its doors to blacks, thus becoming the first multi-racial school in Rhodesia. He remained chairman till 1976, during which time the school experienced alternating booms and extreme crises. But it survived under Williams's courageous leadership and with help from the Beit Trust. Williams became chairman again during the 1980s. By then the pupils had increased to 550, and a girls' school and a mixed preparatory school had been added. It received an accolade from Dr Robert Mugabe when he gave the speech day address in 1987. Our candidate went on to promote the establishment of an Association of Governing Bodies of all private schools in Zimbabwe, together with a Central Bursary Fund so that access to these schools came within reach of

black pupils without sufficient means. As the Peterhouse headmaster has put it, Williams has made a huge contribution to the conversion of Colonial-type schooling in Rhodesia to something much more relevant for Zimbabwe.

'Rhodes is very dear to me, and I rate my time there as very special'. In these words, Bob Williams has told of a loyalty to this university, going back to the days when Rhodes had mere university college status, and when its numbers were small enough to encourage a special kind of intimacy.

The concern which he and his wife have shown for Rhodes is well reflected in the fact that all their three children have been students here, one of them following his father to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. It is common at Rhodes, on formal occasions, for a toast to be proposed to 'our countries', in the plural. In the age of independent Homelands this can mean all kinds of things to different people. But it emphatically includes the link with Zimbabwe which has always been a strong one, with reference to both students and teaching and administrative staff. The Williamses are part of the inner core of this relationship. So for his loyalty, for his service as a member of the original Board of Governors of the University, for a lifetime of public service in a country whose association with Rhodes has been close, and for integrity and law-abiding quality of his political convictions, I ask you, Mr Chancellor, to confer on Noel Arthur Francis Williams the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.



The Rhodes "Swing College Band" in a festive mood at the annual Garden Party, held on St Peter's lawns.