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RHODES UNIVERSITY

TOAST TO HONORARY GRADUATES AT LUNCHEON - SATURDAY 8 APRIL 1978

MR CHANCELLOR,

THE WIDTH OF THIS UNIVERSITY'S INTEREST IN HUMAN ENDEAVOUR AND ACHIEVEMENT IS CLEARLY MIRRORED IN THE WIDELY DIVERGENT FIELDS OF ACTIVITY FROM WHICH WE HAVE DRAWN THE MEN WHOM WE SEEK TO HONOUR ON THIS OCCASION. WE CERTAINLY DID NOT PLAN IT THAT WAY, BUT HAD WE IN FACT SET OUT TO CHOOSE EMINENT ACHIEVERS IN THE WIDEST POSSIBLE VARIETY OF OCCUPATIONS, WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE BETTER. AND YET, INDIVIDUAL EXCELLENCE IS NOT THE ONLY BOND BETWEEN THEM, BUT AS I GO THROUGH THE LIST OF NAMES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER, OTHER LINKS WILL BECOME APPARENT.

2.

FIRST, ALPHABETICALLY, I REFER TO DR CRAIB, WHO DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO THE PURSUIT, AND TEACHING, OF MEDICAL SCIENCE - EXCEPT, OF COURSE, FOR THE YEARS OF WAR SERVICE THAT SAW HIM DECORATED WITH THE MILITARY CROSS AND BAR. IN A WIDER FIELD, HE SERVED THE NATION AS MEMBER AND CHAIRMAN OF IMPORTANT COMMISSIONS, AND AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE C.S.I.R. THE FACT THAT HE WAS ONCE CHAIRMAN OF A COMMISSION CONCERNED WITH THE SAFEGUARDING OF MAN AGAINST POISONING, MAKES HIM A COMFORTING COMPANION AT ANY MEAL SUCH AS THIS. MANY HONOURS HAVE BEEN SHOWERED ON DR CRAIB, BUT RHODES UNIVERSITY COULD NOT FORGO THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO A TRULY GREAT MEDICAL SCIENTIST.

3.

THE FACT THAT DR CRAIB IS A PRODUCT OF GILL COLLEGE, LINKS HIM WITH THE NEXT NAME ON MY ALPHABETICAL LIST, THE HONOURABLE DR JENNETT, FORMER JUDGE PRESIDENT OF THE CAPE EASTERN DIVISION OF THE SUPREME COURT, WHO ALSO RECEIVED HIS SCHOOLING AT GILL COLLEGE. A COMFORTABLE SPACE OF YEARS SEPARATED THE TWO, HOWEVER, THUS ENSURING THAT THERE IS NO DANGER TODAY OF FORMER PREFECT AND FAG BEING TREATED WITH UNSEEMLY EQUALITY. JUDGE JENNETT, AS HE WILL ALWAYS BE KNOWN TO US, IS AN OLD RHODIAN AND, OF COURSE, A LONG-SERVING PRESIDENT OF OUR CONVOCATION. WE ARE SORRY INDEED THAT HE CANNOT BE WITH US AT THIS MOMENT, AND THE DEGREE CONFERRED ON HIM TO-DAY EXPRESSES OUR DEEP REGARD FOR THIS SCHOLARLY PILLAR OF JUSTICE.

4.

I AM NOT GOING TO SUGGEST THAT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN SOME MARATHON TRIALS, DURING HIS CAREER, ALLOWS ME TO CALL THE JUDGE AN ATHLETE, BUT HIS REPUTATION AT BOWLS DOES PERMIT ME TO POINT TO HIM AS A SPORTSMAN OF LONG STANDING, WHICH LINKS HIM TO MY NEXT NAME, DR MOUNTAIN. FOR NOT ONLY HAS OUR EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY THE ENDURING DISTINCTION OF HAVING REPRESENTED BRITAIN IN THE HALF-MILE AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES, BUT OVER THE YEARS AT RHODES, WHEN HE WAS NOT RUNNING DEGREE COURSES FOR STUDENTS HE WAS RUNNING LONG DISTANCES TO MAINTAIN HIS OWN STANDARD OF FITNESS. IN OROGRAPHIC TERMS, THE EMINENCE OF PROFESSOR MOUNTAIN, AS COMPARED WITH THE EMINENCE OF THE HILLS AROUND US, FULLY SUPPORTS THE COMMON ASSUMPTION THAT MOUNTAIN DRIVE MUST HAVE BEEN NAMED IN HIS HONOUR. BUT IT IS AS A GREAT GEOLOGIST, WHO CONTRIBUTED RICHLY TO OUR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR SUB-CONTINENT, THAT WE PROUDLY LAY OUR HONOURS AT HIS FEET TO-DAY.

HIS LIFELONG INTEREST IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE EARTH BELOW GROUND-LEVEL,
 x LINK^e DR MOUNTAIN AUTOMATICALLY WITH DR ROBERTS, WHO HAD A LIFELONG INTEREST
 IN STRUCTURES ABOVE GROUND-LEVEL. THE PRODUCTS OF HIS CREATIVE WORK ARE SPREAD
 SO WIDELY ACROSS THE FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA THAT, WHILE OTHERS MIGHT CLAIM TO
 HAVE BUILT THE NATION, HE CAN CERTAINLY CLAIM TO HAVE BUILT FOR THE NATION.
 IT HAS BEEN SAID OF MANY A MAN THAT, IF YOU SEEK HIS MONUMENT YOU NEED BUT
 LOOK AROUND YOU, BUT HERE IN GRAHAMSTOWN WE CAN SAY IT, WITH LITERAL MEANING,
 OF DR ROBERTS , AND POINT TO THE IMPRESSIVE MEMORIAL ON GUNFIRE HILL. BUT
 HE NOT ONLY BUILDS HIS MONUMENTS OF BRICK AND STONE FOR, AS PRESIDENT OF
 THE MONUMENT COUNCIL, HE IS ACTIVELY HELPING TO BUILD A GREATER INTANGIBLE
 MEMORIAL WITH WHICH HIS NAME WILL ALWAYS BE ASSOCIATED. FOR THIS, AND
 FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE NATION IN THE C.S.I.R., THE PRIME MINISTER'S SCIENTIFIC
 ADVISORY COUNCIL, AND IN OTHER FIELDS, WE PAY TRIBUTE TO HIM TO-DAY.

AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 'ANTI-SHARK' ACTION COMMITTEE, DR ROBERTS
 WAS NOT FIGHTING THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, BUT WAS GENUINELY
 INVOLVED WITH DENIZENS OF THE DEEP. SO WAS DR VAN DER POST
 WHEN HE PRODUCED HIS BOOK, "HUNTER AND THE WHALE". IN ADDITION,
 OF COURSE, HE PRODUCED A WHOLE BOOKSHELF OF EXCELLENT LITERATURE
 AS AN ENRISHING GIFT TO OUR GENERATION AND TO MANY AFTER US.
 HIS CAREER, LIKE HIS WRITING, IS CHARACTERISED BY ALMOST BREATH-
 TAKING SCOPE AND VARIETY, AND HE HAS SERVED MANKIND IN THREE
 CONTINENTS IN THE MANNER OF THE TRUE COSMOPOLITAN WHO LOOKS ON
 THE WHOLE WORLD AS HIS HOME. AND YET, BACK IN SOUTH AFRICA,
 THE WORD "FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN" FALLS SO NATURALLY FROM HIS LIPS.
 MAY I ASSURE HIM THAT WE WILL ALL FEEL HONOURED, HENCEFORTH, TO
 OWN HIM AS A "FELLOW RHODIAN".

WHEN COL. VAN DER POST WAS SOLDIERING IN NORTH AFRICA, HE WAS UNWITTINGLY HELPING ME BY FORGING THE FINAL LINK IN THE CHAIN THAT HAS LEAD ME SO HAPPILY TO-DAY FROM NAME TO NAME IN MY ALPHABETICAL LIST, FOR DOING THE SAME THING AT THAT TIME, WAS DR VAN WYK, WHO WAS AN OFFICER IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARTILLERY. [ONLY MY FEAR OF PRODUCING A COMPLETE 'NUT' STOPS ME FROM MAKING A PUN ABOUT HAVING BOTH THE COLONEL (KERNEL) AND THE SHELLS.] BUT IT WAS BACK IN SOUTH AFRICA THAT DR VAN WYK, FOR ALL HIS NATURAL MODESTY, EMERGED AS THE "BIG SHOT" WHO ALWAYS STUCK TO HIS GUNS AMID ALL THE TRIALS THAT HE FACED IN HIS WORK FOR THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS. ENTRENCHED IN THE ETHOS OF RHODES UNIVERSITY IS A GREAT RESPECT FOR QUIET COURAGE, AND TO THAT RESPECT WE HAVE SOUGHT TO GIVE SOME EXPRESSION TODAY.

I MOST HEARTILY WELCOME OUR HONORARY GRADUATES TO THE FAMILY CIRCLE OF RHODES UNIVERSITY, AND I ASK YOU TO RISE TO THE TOAST OF 'THE HONORARY GRADUATES'

D S HENDERSON