

Excellent! Approved
D.S.H.
2/12/86

(F) Speeches
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SPEECH AT FAREWELL PARTY - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1986

PROFESSOR GUY BUTLER

Guy Butler, although he has been somewhat absentminded about his fingers in the past, has, nevertheless had a number of very effective fingers in a number of successful Rhodes University pies over the years since he has been a member of the staff here.

Guy Butler first came to Rhodes as a student in 1936, leaving in 1939 with an MA with distinction. After an interruption of eleven years which included a spell of teaching at St John's College, Johannesburg, war service, two years at Oxford and time as a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, he returned to where he belonged in 1951.

Since then, Guy Butler's fingers have been doing the walking through a number of books, none of them yellow. Five books of verse, five plays, two books, two volumes of autobiography, and the editing of numerous anthologies of verse and drama, as well as diaries and historical works.

All this exercise obviously kept those fingers fit and ready for action in other areas, more particularly in the life of this university. Guy Butler's vision and enthusiasm were largely responsible for the genesis of a second Chair of English at Rhodes and the Department of Linguistics and English Language, the Institute for the Study of English in Africa, the Department of Speech and Drama, and the

Department of Journalism. All of these interests grew out of his love for his language and its literature. He was one of the first to champion the cause of South African English Literature.

His guiding hand was also in evidence in the development of the 1820 Foundation and its various cultural and educational activities. He it was who persuaded the committee planning the 1820 Settlers National Monument that a useful building would be far preferable to a shrine. He was also one of the prime movers in the establishment of the National Festival of the Arts and the National Schools' Festival of English.

Although I have mentioned some of ^Guy Butler's contributions to this University, there are so many and ~~and~~ they are so varied that it would be difficult to catalogue them all. Fortunately, at a gathering like this, most of us present are aware of what Guy Butler has given to Rhodes, to South African education and to English literature in general. Some of us here have been his students in past years and are now his colleagues. Two other South African Universities - the Universities of Natal and the Witwatersrand - have acknowledged his work by conferring honorary degrees on him.

We are not saying a final 'Goodbye' to Guy and Jean Butler, we are marking a milestone in the career of one of Rhodes University's most illustrious members. We wish you well, in the hope that there will be more books, more enthusiasms, and more enjoyment of the riches of the English language and its literature. *7 the years ahead*