

11/2/82

RHODES UNIVERSITY EAST LONDON DIVISION :
COMMENCEMENT OF ACADEMIC YEAR 1982

IN MY FIRST WORDS THIS AFTERNOON LET ME SAY WHAT A PLEASURE AND A PRIVILEGE IT IS FOR ME AS PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF RHODES UNIVERSITY TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION WHICH FORMALLY MARKS BOTH THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE 1982 ACADEMIC YEAR AND THE INITIATION OF THIS HANDSOME BUILDING FOR ITS NEW PURPOSE. EVER SINCE I ASSUMED MY PRESENT OFFICE IN OCTOBER 1975 I HAVE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO IDENTIFY MYSELF WITH THE EFFORTS BEING MOUNTED TO IMPROVE THE TERTIARY EDUCATION FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN EAST LONDON. A VITAL FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS WE HAVE SO FAR ACHIEVED HAS BEEN THE COMMITMENT AND ENTHUSIASM OF INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE FROM EVERY IMPORTANT SECTOR OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY. I CAN RECOLLECT VERY WELL ATTENDING A MEETING IN

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NOVEMBER 1975, COMMISSIONED BY THE THEN MAYOR, COUNCILLOR J A YAZBEK. AT THAT MEETING AN AD HOC COMMITTEE WAS FORMED. AMONGST ITS TASKS WAS TO ASSESS THE DEMAND FOR UNIVERSITY LEVEL EDUCATION AND TO RAISE THE NECESSARY FUNDS, BY WAY OF DONATIONS AND GUARANTEES, TO MAKE A VIABLE START. AFTER NUMEROUS SETBACKS AND DIFFICULTIES ALL PARTIES, THE LOCAL COMMUNITY, THE RHODES COUNCIL AND SENATE AND FINALLY PARLIAMENT THROUGH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, WERE PERSUADED THAT WE SHOULD GO AHEAD. WE OPENED EXACTLY A YEAR AGO, AND NOW WE HAVE REACHED A FURTHER SIGNIFICANT STAGE AS WE TAKE IN OUR SECOND BATCH OF STUDENTS IN OUR VERY OWN BUILDING, WHOSE ACQUISITION WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROUS DONATIONS TO WHICH MR ASHTON CHUBB HAS ALREADY MAKE REFERENCE. THE OLD AD HOC COMMITTEE HAS MADE WAY FOR A PROPERLY CONSTITUTED COMMITTEE TO ADVISE SENATE AND COUNCIL ON THE AFFAIRS OF THIS DIVISION. THE MERE MENTION OF MR CHUBB'S NAME OF

NECESSITY FOCUSES ON THE INVALUABLE, INDEED INDISPENSABLE PART HE HAS PLAYED, AS INDEFATIGABLE CHAIRMAN OF BOTH COMMITTEES I HAVE MENTIONED. IF ANY SINGLE PERSON CAN BE SAID TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS LUSTY ONE-YEAR OLD INFANT WHOSE FIRST BIRTHDAY WE ARE CELEBRATING TODAY THAT PERSON IS UNDOUBTEDLY ASHTON CHUBB. I AM NOT CERTAIN AS TO WHAT IS THE APPROPRIATE METAPHOR. SHOULD WE CALL HIM THE FATHER OR THE MIDWIFE OR THE NURSE OF THE FLEDGLING RHODES EAST LONDON DIVISION? PERHAPS THERE ARE ASPECTS OF ALL THREE. AS WE, THAT IS THE CITY AND THE UNIVERSITY, THANK HIM MOST WARMLY FOR HIS EFFORTS, LET US NOT FORGET THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SUCH STALWART SUPPORTERS AS MESSRS BOSWORTH, RECSEI, ROWLAND AND ORPEN.

AS JONATHAN STEAD, OUR ENERGETIC DEAN OF STUDIES, HAS ALREADY DESCRIBED WE HAVE MADE ENORMOUS STRIDES SINCE OUR INAUGURATION A YEAR AGO. DURING THAT FIRST YEAR WE HAD EXACTLY ONE RESIDENT FULL-TIME ACADEMIC MEMBER OF STAFF IN MR J H COOPER, LECTURER IN ECONOMICS. MR J D HAYDOCK MUST HAVE CLOCKED UP MANY THOUSANDS OF KILOMETRES IN COMMUTING FROM GRAHAMSTOWN TO CONDUCT CLASSES IN MERCANTILE LAW. TO THESE MEMBERS OF STAFF AND TO THE PART-TIME LECTURERS WHO HAVE BEEN OF INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND IN THE MATHEMATICAL AND STATISTICAL COMPONENT OF THE CURRICULUM WE ALSO EXTEND A HEARTY WORD OF THANKS. IT IS WITH PARTICULAR PLEASURE THAT WE OFFER A WARM WELCOME TO PROFESSOR STEPHEN COLLIS, WHO HAS AGREED TO ACCEPT A TRANSFER FROM GRAHAMSTOWN TO TAKE CHARGE OF THE ACCOUNTING COURSES. LATER IN THE YEAR WE INTEND TO APPOINT A FURTHER MEMBER OF STAFF IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, SO THAT THE FULL-TIME RESIDENT ACADEMIC STAFF WILL INCREASE BY 200% IN ONE YEAR.

OUR SENSE OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THE COMMUNITY, STRENGTHENED BY THE EXPANSION OF STAFF TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, HAS BEEN FURTHER ENHANCED BY THE ACQUISITION OF THIS IMPRESSIVE AND WELL KNOWN EAST LONDON LANDMARK, THE WOOL EXCHANGE BUILDING, TOGETHER WITH THE ADJACENT VACANT PROPERTY. THIS SPLENDID ROOM IN WHICH WE ARE NOW GATHERED HAD AS ITS MAIN FUNCTION UNTIL VERY RECENTLY THE AUCTIONING OF BALES OF ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST WELL-ESTABLISHED PRODUCTS, WOOL. IT IS GRATIFYING TO OBSERVE HOW EASILY, WITH ONLY MINOR ADAPTATIONS, IT WILL CONFORM TO ITS NEW PURPOSE. ALTHOUGH THE CITY OF EAST LONDON AND RHODES UNIVERSITY ARE BOTH GREAT ADMIRERS AND CONSERVERS OF TRADITION, WE SHALL HAVE TO ACCEPT WITH RESIGNATION ONE NECESSARY BREAK WITH FORMER PROCEDURE. I CAN GIVE YOU A FIRM ASSURANCE THAT THERE WILL BE NOTHING WOOLLY ABOUT THE LECTURES PRESENTED IN THIS VENUE, OR THE THINKING REQUIRED OF OUR STUDENTS.

AS I TURN NOW TO OUR STUDENTS, BOTH THOSE RETURNING AND THOSE INTENDING TO REGISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME, I MUST EXPRESS MY GREAT ADMIRATION FOR YOUR DEDICATION AND SENSE OF PURPOSE IN ENDEAVOURING TO ACQUIRE YOUR DEGREE THROUGH PART-TIME STUDY, WHILE IN MOST CASES EARNING YOUR LIVING SIMULTANEOUSLY. MANY MORE FAVOURABLY PLACED STUDENTS FIND IT A STRUGGLE TO OBTAIN THEIR DEGREES UNDER THE FAR MORE FAVOURABLE CIRCUMSTANCE OF BEING ABLE TO DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO IT SINGLEMINDEDLY. THERE IS A NATURAL TENDENCY FOR THE PART-TIME STUDENT, FACED WITH THE LONG YEARS OF STUDY AHEAD OF HIM, TO BECOME IMPATIENT AND HENCE OVERAMBITIOUS. HE BITES OFF MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW, AND THEN BECOMES DISCOURAGED WHEN HE DISCOVERS THAT HIS INITIAL EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF ATTAINMENT. THE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM IS TO RESIGN YOURSELF TO A REALISTIC, ATTAINABLE PROGRAMME.

THERE IS NO CALL FOR DESPONDENCY PROVIDED EACH YEAR YOU MAKE SOME MEASURABLE PROGRESS, HOWEVER MODEST, TOWARDS THAT COVETED GOAL OF A BACHELOR OF COMMERCE DEGREE. BE PREPARED TO WEIGH UP CAREFULLY THE ADVICE OF YOUR DEAN OF STUDENTS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF. THEY ARE NOT TRYING TO PUT YOU DOWN, BUT RATHER TO ASSIST YOU TO VIEW YOUR TOTAL COMMITMENTS, TO YOUR WORK, TO YOUR FAMILIES AND TO YOUR STUDIES IN A BALANCED LIGHT. REMEMBER ALSO THAT A PRIZE WON THROUGH EXTENDED EFFORT AND PATIENCE IS A PRIZE THAT MUCH MORE VALUED AND EARNED. IT SURELY IS OF GREAT INCOURAGEMENT TO YOU TO BE AWARE OF THE SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT OF YOUR EMPLOYER AND YOUR FAMILY, AND INDEED YOUR COMMUNITY. THIS SUPPORT IS FINANCIAL AS WELL AS MORAL. FOR INSTANCE, FOR EVERY AND YOU PAY IN FEES, THE COMMUNITY, DIRECTLY THROUGH DONATIONS AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH TAXES THAT GO TO MEET THE UNIVERSITY'S SUBSIDY INCOME, CONTRIBUTES AT LEAST THREE RANDS TOWARDS YOUR EDUCATION.

THE ACQUISITION OF THIS BUILDING AS A VISIBLE FOCUS FOR OUR ACTIVITIES AND THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FURTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF TO WHICH I HAVE REFERRED, HAVE SURELY ENGENDERED A SENSE OF CONTINUITY, CONFIDENCE AND SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE WHICH AUGURS WELL FOR THE FUTURE WELLBEING OF OUR FORMAL, ACADEMIC PROGRAMME. EDUCATION HAS BEEN VERY MUCH IN THE PUBLIC EYE RECENTLY, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE HSRC EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT, UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF PROFESSOR DE LANGE. ONE OF THE MAJOR THRUSTS OF THIS REPORT, WHICH HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS EPOCH-MAKING BY NO LESS AN AUTHORITY THAN THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, HAS BEEN THE TREMENDOUS EMPHASIS IT HAS PLACED ON THE NON-FORMAL, AS OPPOSED TO THE FORMAL ASPECTS OF EDUCATION. IT IS BECOMING MORE EVIDENT THAT NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, IN ITS MANY GUISES - AT THE WORK PLACE, IN SPECIALISED INDUSTRY - SPECIFIC INSTITUTIONS AND OUT IN THE COMMUNITY, IS DESTINED TO PLAY AN INCREASINGLY VITAL ROLE IN THE HUGE EDUCATIONAL TASK WHICH LIES AHEAD OF THE WHOLE COUNTRY.

ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT FACETS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IS ADULT EDUCATION, OR CONTINUING EDUCATION, TO ACCORD IT ITS MORE MODERN NOMENCLATURE. I HAVE LEFT MR STEAD IN NO DOUBT AS TO THE OPPORTUNITIES WE WISH TO DEVELOP FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION IN A COMMUNITY OF THE SIZE AND DIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON, WHEN COMPARED WITH OUR PRINCIPAL SEAT OF GRAHAMSTOWN. COMMITTED AS HE WAS LAST YEAR TO THE MAJOR TASK OF INAUGURATING THE DIVISION AND THEN ARRANGING FOR ITS TRANSFER HERE, HE WAS NEVERTHELESS ABLE TO MAKE SOME MODEST BEGINNINGS. I AM OFFERING HIM EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT TO DEVELOP AND EXTEND THIS ASPECT OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY DURING THE YEARS AHEAD. IF, AS IS DEVOUTLY HOPED, THE GOVERNMENT CAN BE PERSUADED TO MAKE SOME PROVISION IN A REVISED UNIVERSITY SUBSIDY FORMULA TO PROVIDE RESOURCES IN THIS AREA, AND ALSO TO ALLOW TAX CONCESSIONS FOR DONATIONS EARMARKED FOR THE PURPOSE, WE SHALL BE IN A POSITION TO DEVOTE MORE EFFORT TO ESTABLISHING OUR ACTIVITIES ON A FIRMER FOUNDATION.

FINALLY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, AS WE CONTINUE INTO THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR UNFOLDING B.COM. PROGRAMME, THOUGHTS WILL INEVITABLY TURN TO THE CONSIDERATION OF WHAT OTHER STUDY PROGRAMMES CAN BE OFFERED. A WORD OF CAUTION MUST BE CONSIDERED. BEFORE ANY COMMITMENTS IN NEW AREAS CAN BE UNDERTAKEN A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT OF THE POTENTIAL DEMAND AND OF THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS IS ESSENTIAL. NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE TO BE CONVINCED OURSELVES OF THE DESIRABILITY AND VIABILITY OF ANY NEW PROPOSALS, BUT SO DOES THE MINISTER, ON ADVICE FROM THE UNIVERSITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL. HE WILL NOT ALWAYS, REGRETTABLY, BE AUTOMATICALLY CONVINCED OF THE RIGHTNESS OF OUR CAUSE.

IT REMAINS FOR ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR KEEN INTEREST IN THIS VENTURE OF FAITH, AS EXHIBITED BY YOUR PRESENCE HERE TO-DAY. IT HAS INDEED BEEN A VENTURE OF FAITH, FROM THE FIRST FAINT STIRRINGS AS FAR BACK AS

1968, THROUGH TO THE FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE, THE AMENDMENT OF OUR PRIVATE ACT, THE RAISING OF FUNDS, THE COMMENCEMENT OF CLASSES, THE ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE AND THE SINKING OF MORE SUBSTANTIAL ROOTS. TRULY, AS THE PROPHET JOEL SAID, OUR OLD MEN, TO WHOM WE HAVE PAID TRIBUTE TO-DAY, HAVE DREAMT DREAMS AND THE YOUNG MEN BEFORE US HAVE SEEN VISIONS.

AND NOW YOUR PATIENCE WILL BE REWARDED, AS THE FORMAL PART OF OUR PROCEEDINGS DRAW TO A CLOSE, AND WE SHORTLY ADJOURN TO ENJOY SOME WELCOME REFRESHMENT.

DR D S HENDERSON

11/2/82