

Rhodes University

**Vice-Chancellor's
Annual Report
1979**



The Vice-Chancellor
Dr Derek Henderson

75 years

The year 1979 was of particular importance to Rhodes University. It was the 75th anniversary of the founding of the university college in Grahamstown as the result of a gift of £50 000 from the Rhodes Trust. The anniversary celebrations were attended by the only survivor of the original students to register in 1904, Mr J.H. Steere.

From the Old Drostdy begun by Piet Retief, the university has grown into an estate of 195 hectares of buildings, gardens, tree-lined streets, playing fields and open ground. Nestling under Gunfire Hill and dominating the city and campus are many buildings designed by Sir Herbert Baker and his partners.

These are among 70 major buildings which include 24 academic buildings, 29 residences, seven dining halls and 10 other buildings such as the university chapel and student union.

Rather than demolishing and replacing its older buildings, the university has decided to renovate them and retain the character of the campus.

Another long term decision was the acceptance of the Mallows' plan, which recommends the conversion of the central campus between the library and the Drostdy lawn to a pedestrian area where only essential service vehicles will be allowed. Professor E.W.N. Mallows was commissioned in 1975 to prepare a master plan for the development of the campus.

The university's task is to preserve, enlarge and transmit knowledge but current trends at Rhodes are using the combined knowledge of different disciplines in new ways to meet the changing demands of modern society. The B.Sc. (Information Processing) degree is intended for students who wish to become computer specialists in commerce.

In response to a need to provide specialist training in the study of lakes, rivers and wetland systems, the university has completed preparations for an M.Sc. degree in limnology which combines hydrology, physical and biological limnology, and fisheries science. When this is offered in 1980, it will be the first such degree available in English at a South African university.

The Rhodes University Act, amended in May, enabled the university to extend its work to East London. An active ad hoc committee has raised sufficient funds to allow the university to offer courses in 1981. These will be held at the East London Technical College and initially courses will be offered that lead to a B. Com. degree with the emphasis on accounting.

Representations were again made to the government to establish a faculty of veterinary science at Rhodes. The first steps in this direction were taken in 1905, when the university college pioneered a movement aimed at elevating agricultural training to university level and establishing a veterinary centre in Grahamstown. The first university agricultural courses in South Africa were held at Rhodes during the winter vacations of 1907 and 1908, but were discontinued when it became apparent that the desired agricultural college for the Eastern Province would probably be established elsewhere.

Staff

In spite of financial pressures, Rhodes University has been able to maintain a very favourable staff to student ratio. The 223 academic staff members were on average each responsible for 12 to 13 students and were backed up by two other members of staff — 220 administrative and supporting staff, and 250 semi-skilled and unskilled workers. This last figure reflects a 6% reduction during 1979 as a result of a deliberate policy of not filling inessential vacancies. Although part of an efficiency drive, an equally important aspect of this policy is the avoidance of any retrenchment. The university employed another 37 senior and 213 junior staff in the residences.

Besides their general teaching duties, the academic staff published a large number of books and articles on their research work. During the year they produced 39 books or monographs, and 159 journal articles and 39 articles in abstract. Seventy seven papers were presented and published at local academic or scientific conferences and 19 were presented and published at overseas conferences. Six members of the Department of Fine Art showed their work at 28 exhibitions in South Africa and overseas.

The university organised 38 conferences or symposia at Rhodes and was responsible for another ten in conjunction with scientific societies.

One of the major sufferers of financial stringency and its inflationary causes has been the library. The additions of books and bound volumes of periodicals during 1978 and 1979 were the lowest this decade. Nonetheless, the library's collection now totals almost a quarter of a million volumes. During the year there were 135 533 issues, including short loan and reserve issues, amounting to an average of 48 issues per student.



The building in which the Cape Colony's Bacteriological Institute was investigating horse sickness in the early 1890's, is still standing on the Rhodes campus. Described as "the most modern and complete laboratory in the southern hemisphere" when it was set up by Alexander Edington in what had been the Royal Engineers' Yard, the laboratory provided Grahamstown's first link with the veterinary sciences.

Research institutes

One of the most exciting aspects of the university's activities is the work being carried out by the five research institutes attached to Rhodes.

Of particular interest was the affiliation of the International Library of African Music to the Institute of Social and Economic Research (I.S.E.R.) in May. The library was formerly at Roodepoort and has moved to premises adjoining the institute. Receiving financial assistance from the institute, the library will continue with its documentation and research work.

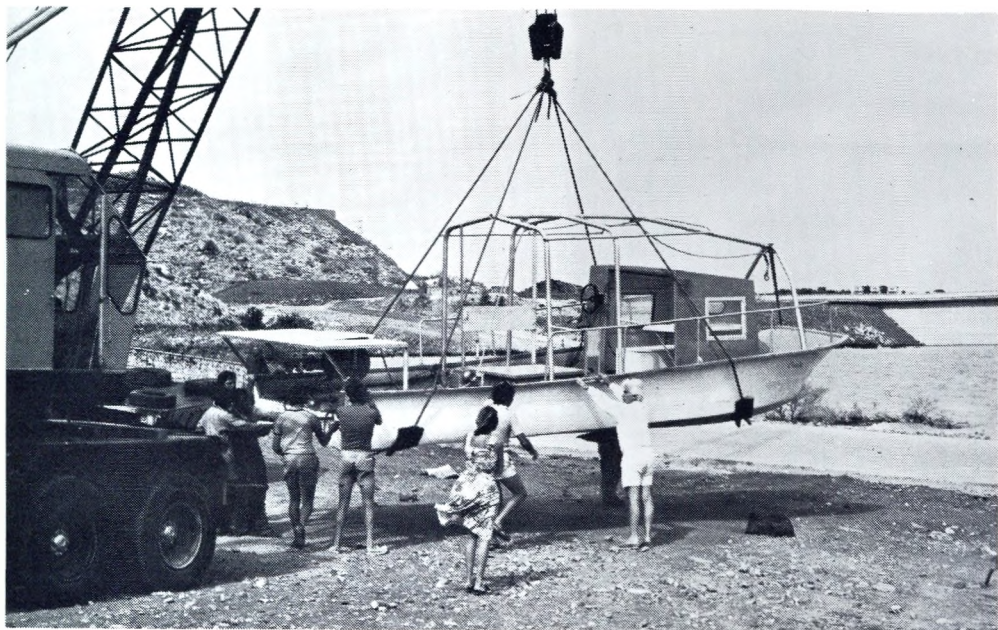
The I.S.E.R. completed a five year socio-economic survey of the Border/Transkei region requested by the East London municipality. Besides undertaking a study of malnutrition and infant mortality in the Grahamstown area for the Department of Health, the institute has been commissioned by the Urban Foundation to launch a study of the quality of life in the Eastern Cape and Border. Work continued on a number of other programmes.

The Institute for the Study of English in Africa extended its Molteno Project programme to another 30 schools in Transkei during 1979 and is negotiating to have it launched at a large number of black schools throughout South Africa. Preparations are being made to launch the programme at all the black primary schools in Grahamstown next year. The project aims at combating illiteracy among black school children and assisting second language users of English.

Work continues on the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography of South African literature in English and on the "Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles."

One aspect of the work of the Institute for Freshwater Studies during 1979 concerned a co-operative scientific programme on the flood plain of the Touws River near the Wilderness and the limnology of P.K. le Roux dam near Petrusville in the Cape. The institute continued its investigation of the role of the littoral zone of Swartvlei in the biology of estuarine and marine fish.

A book on Lake Sibaya was published in October and is a useful collection and interpretation of information about this important Zululand lake on which the institute has been working for 10 years. The policy of the institute continues to be one of extending understanding of South African wetland ecology upon a sound base of limnological fact.



The Institute for Freshwater Studies' research vessel, Crolia, being relaunched on the P K le Roux dam after repairs. The boat was damaged during a storm.



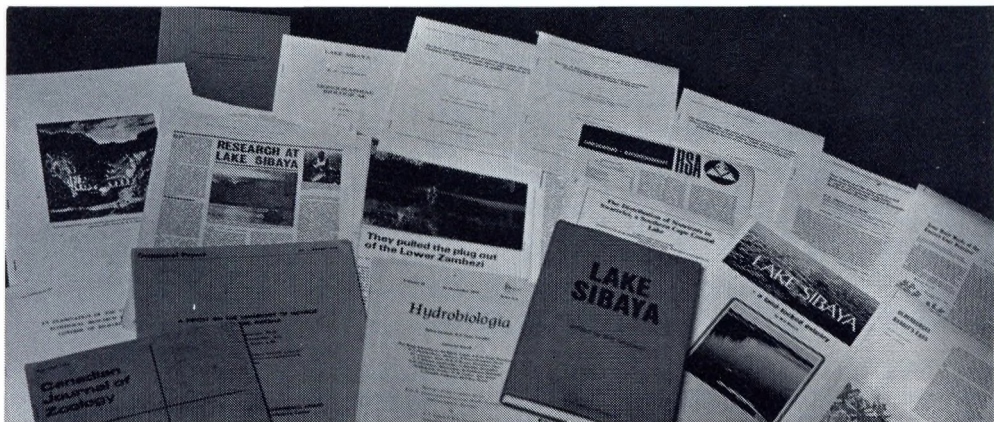
The Molteno project comprised of the 'Breakthrough to Literacy' and 'Bridge to English' programmes, continues to be a major undertaking of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa. The project initially teaches children to read and write in their mother tongue before introducing them to English.

The Tick Research Unit continued with its intensive surveys of ticks in the Eastern Cape. Research focussed on the potential use of pheromones in tick control, new applications of chemical controls on Angora goats, the life cycles of ticks and academic subjects on tick/host relationships.



Among the many international figures to visit the J.L.B. Smith Institute of Ichthyology were Dr Jerry Allen (left), curator of fishes at the Western Australian Museum in Perth, and Dr Jack Randall, curator of fishes at Bishop Museum in Honolulu. They are pictured with Professor Margaret Smith (centre).

The J.L.B. Smith Institute for Ichthyology continued to draw international attention while continuing its work on the fishes of southern Africa. Several research projects and documentation for different publications are under way. A major expedition, which included two eminent internationally known ichthyologists, worked off the east coast of South Africa between St. Lucia Bay and Inhaca Island. The team gathered information for the revision of 'The Sea Fishes of Southern Africa.'



A display of some of the many publications of, and in which, the research work of the Institute for Freshwater Studies has appeared.

Students at work

A problem facing all South African universities during the next decade will be a very small rate of increase in white student numbers. By the mid-eighties the decline in birthrate among white South Africans after the post-war baby boom will become evident in student numbers at the universities.

The possibility of students being able to do pharmacy at technikons and the future of Rhodes are factors which will aggravate the problem at Rhodes where pharmacy students and Rhodesians make up 14 and 13 percent respectively of the student body.

A reason for optimism is the increasing enrolment of blacks, coloureds and Asians at Rhodes where numbers have more than doubled to 118 in the past year.

It is interesting to note that of the student body over 20 percent were postgraduates.










Library students seen under instruction in the university's library.








Rhodes continued to attract students from all over the subcontinent. As was to be expected over half the students were from the Cape Province. The other provinces and South West Africa made up just over a quarter. Nearly one in six students are from other countries.

Fifty-five percent of the students were accommodated in the 29 residences which also housed 1 900 people attending 11 conferences during the vacations.

Students registered in

| Faculty | Undergraduate | Postgraduate | |
|---|---------------|--------------|--|
|  → Arts | 872 | 203 | |
|  → Commerce | 380 | 36 | |
|  → Divinity | 49 | 12 | |
|  → Education | 129 | 173 | |
|  → Law | 17 | 51 | |
|  → Science | 666 | 128 | |
|  → Social Science | 44 | 12 | |
| Sub-Totals | 2 157 (76,8%) | 615 (21,9%) | |
| Plus Occasional students | | | |
| TOTAL | | | |

Graduation statistics

| Faculty | Undergraduate Certificates & Diplomas | Degrees | | |
|---|--|---------|-----|----|
| | | 1st | 2nd | M |
|  → Arts | 12 | 191 | 31 | 10 |
|  → Commerce | 22 | 76 | 7 | 1 |
|  → Divinity | — | 8 | 1 | — |
|  → Education | 41 | — | 16 | — |
|  → Law | — | 2 | 19 | — |
|  → Science | — | 117 | 25 | 17 |
|  → Social Science | — | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| Sub-Totals | 75 | 401 | 103 | 30 |
| TOTAL | | | | |

79

Total

1 075

416

61

302

68

794

56

2 772

37 (1,3%)

2 809

Student origins

| | Students | % |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Cape | 1 588 | 56,5 |
| Natal | 167 | 5,9 |
| O.F.S. | 65 | 2,3 |
| Transvaal | 499 | 17,8 |
| S.W.A. | 36 | 1,3 |
| R.S.A. & S.W.A. | 2 355 | 83,8 |
| Zimbabwe | 369 | 13,1 |
| Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland & Transkei | 48 | 1,7 |
| Malawi, Kenya & Zambia | 22 | 0,8 |
| Australia, Canada, England, Iceland, Iran, United States and West Germany | 15 | 0,5 |
| International | 454 | 16,2 |
| Total | 2 809 | |

Ph.D.

Postgraduate
Diplomas

3

12

—

—

1

82

—

4

—

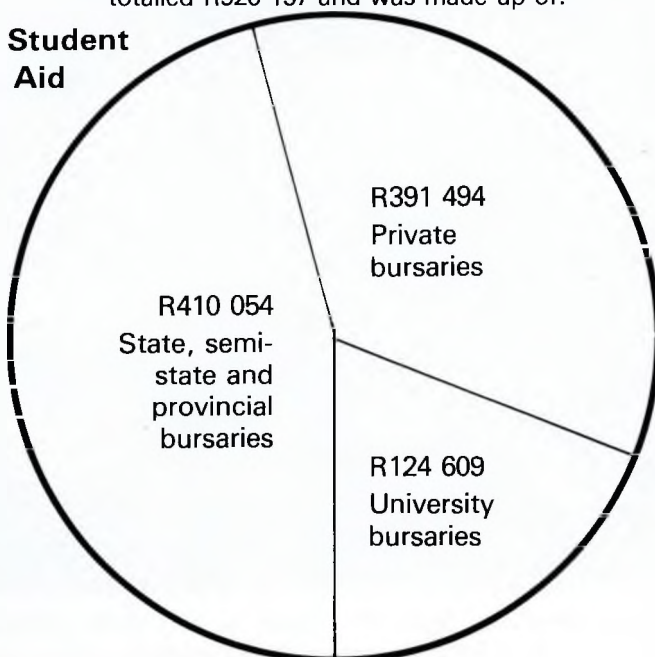
8

94

711

In 1979 financial assistance to students
totalled R926 157 and was made up of:

Student Aid



Students at play



'Razamataz,' a stage production written and produced by Rhodes students, was one of the highlights of student activity during 1979.

Although important, the graduation figures do not fully reflect the diverse activities of the student body. Rhodes students were involved in political and social issues, cultural events and sport. Over 70 percent of the students played some kind of sport at least once a week.

This year the student body collected a record amount for rag charities. Altogether R48 300 was distributed to 30 different organisations in the Eastern Cape — R11 000 more than was distributed the previous year.



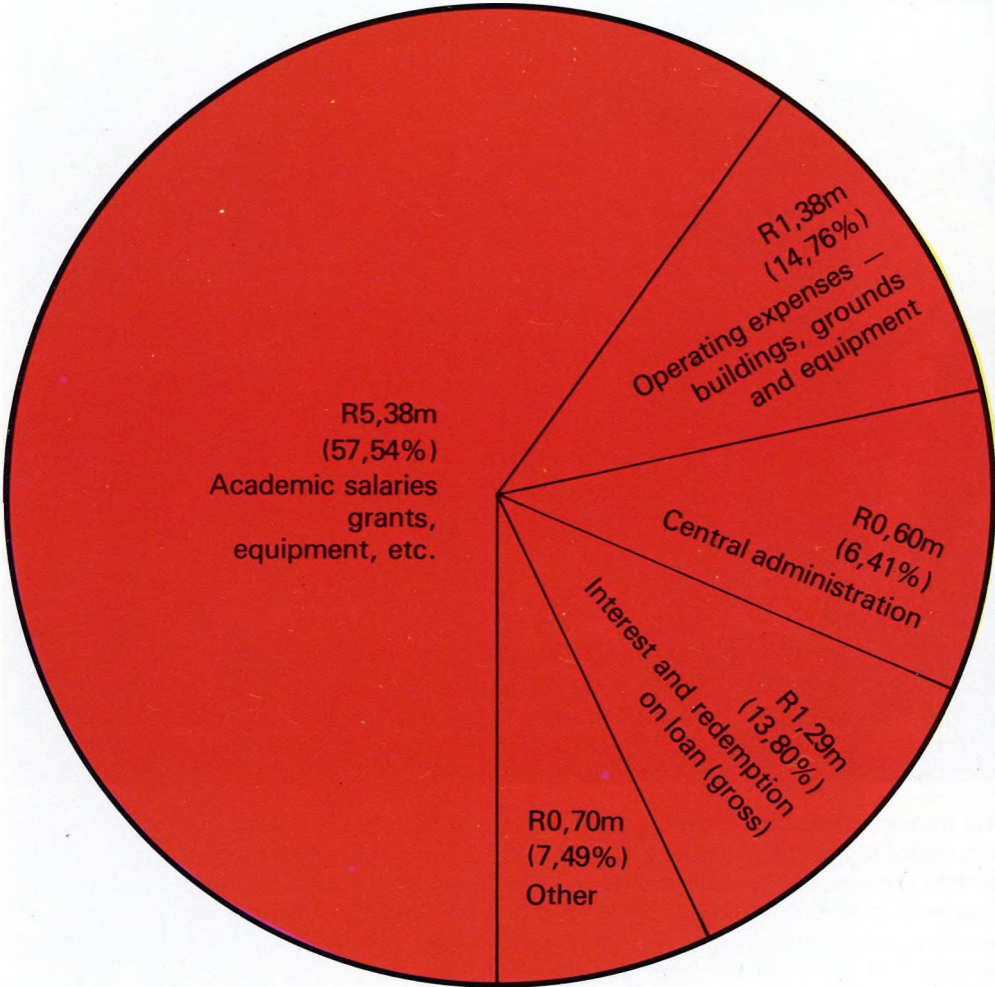
The Rhodes University Chamber Choir had a particularly good year. It enjoyed a highly successful tour of Queenstown, Graaff-Reinet, Kimberley and Bloemfontein. A visit to Umtata drew an enthusiastic response. The choir also travelled to Port Elizabeth where it gave a special concert at the Convention of the South African Music Teachers' Association. It performed at the induction service of the Mayor of Grahamstown and gave its first recital in the university chapel.

The university also welcomed the initiative of several students who wrote a musical Nativity play, produced it and performed in Grahamstown, East London, Umtata, Pietermaritzburg, Durban and Johannesburg during their December vacation. This show, 'Razamataz,' was well received by drama critics of the major newspapers and was featured on radio.

Finance

Operating expenditure totalled R9,35 million and was incurred under the following broad headings:

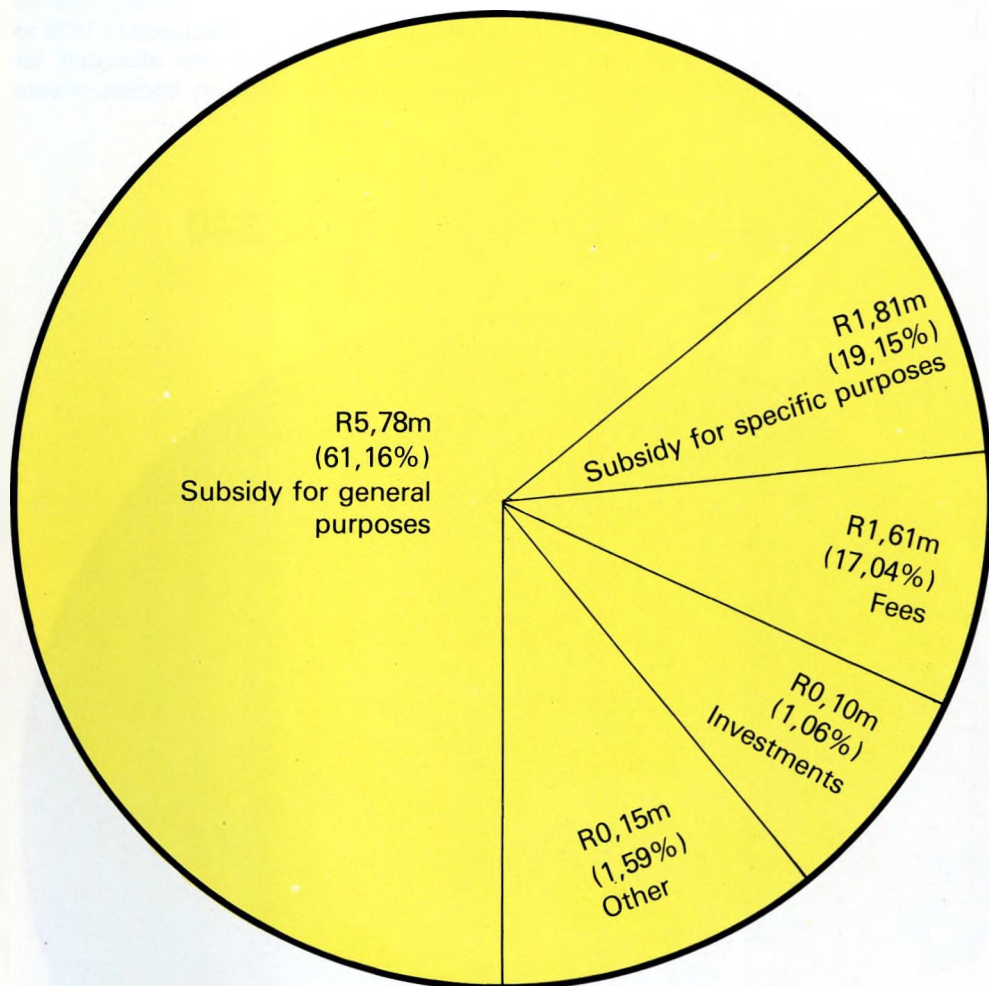
Operating Expenditure = R9,35m



Owing to sound financial management, and despite the problem caused by rising costs and low student growth, the university's finances were firmly based at the end of 1979.

Revenue totalled R9,45 million and was derived from the following sources:

Revenue = R9,45m



Expenditure per student was R3 330 and income per student was R3 365.

The university purchased a computer costing R367 000; this figure is included under operating expenditure.

The university had investments worth R3,8 million and fixed assets worth R27,6 million at the end of 1979.

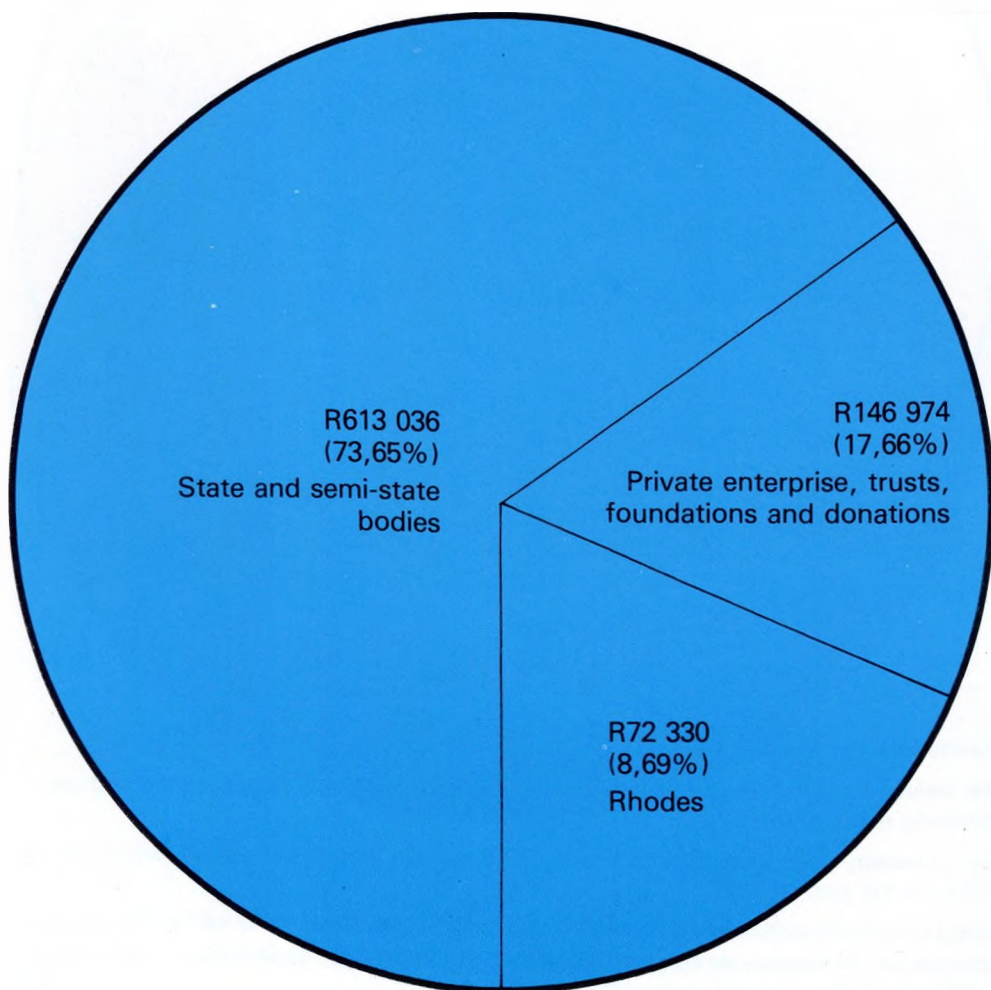
Long term loans outstanding totalled R16,4 million and short term loans R1,3 million.

Expenditure on residences totalled R1,70 million (R1,128 per student) and income was R1,68 million (R1,115 per student).

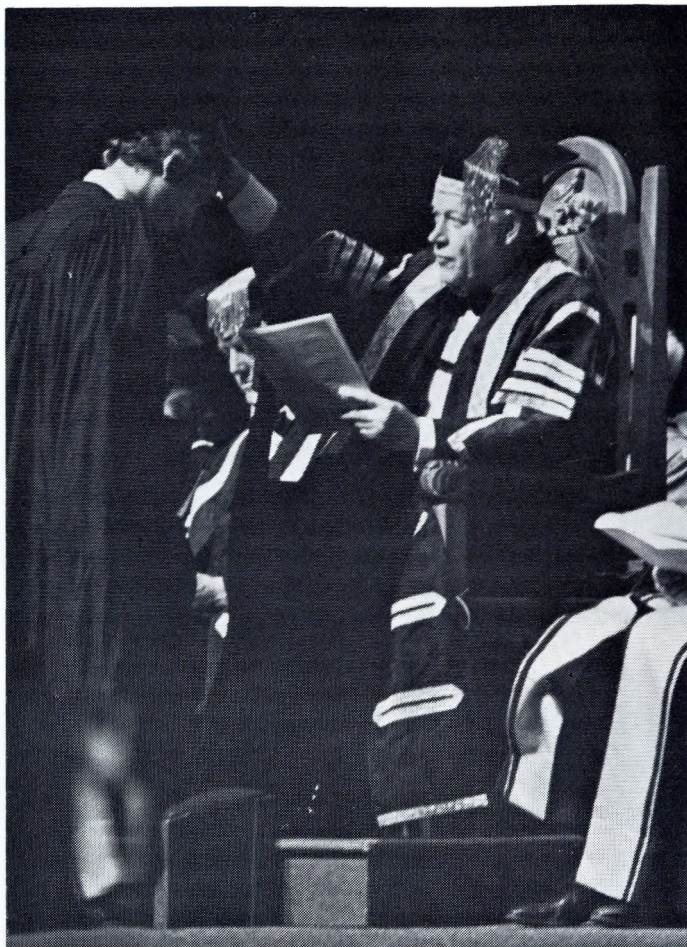
Sources of research funding

The university's research activities continue to enjoy a high reputation throughout the commercial and scientific world. As a result, the university was called upon in 1979 to contribute from its own resources only 8,69 percent of the monies allocated for research, the balance coming from government departments, statutory bodies, private corporations, trusts, etc.

Research Funding = R832 340



Graduation



Four honorary degrees were awarded at Rhodes University during the year. In April the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa was conferred on Professor Winifred Maxwell, professor emeritus of the university and former Head of the Department of History.

In September at a special graduation ceremony coinciding with the university's 75th anniversary, the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa was conferred on Professor Hugh Chapman, also professor emeritus of the university and former Dean of Students, and on Dr. Donald Sole, South Africa's ambassador to Washington. The degree Doctor of Science honoris causa was conferred on Dr. Francis Hewitt, Deputy President of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.



The 1979 Rhodes expedition to the Okavango Swamps in Botswana watches their vehicle being 'dipped' as a precaution against foot and mouth disease.

Expedition members netting fish in the swamps.



A mid-year expedition from Rhodes carried out ichthyological, botanical and sediment/hydrological research on the Okavango swamps in northern Botswana. The expedition, organised by the Department of Geography, provided useful training for students in research techniques and, because of the combined nature of the team, yielded a composite picture of the swamp resources, and made possible further research by Rhodes. Another expedition leaves in May 1980 to make a preliminary investigation of the Lake Ngami area as part of a proposed four-year research programme. This research may be the key to the establishment of an overall management plan for the future of the swamps.