

26/02/1985

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the first of February, 1944, Rhodes University employed a new shorthand typist in the Registrar's Office. Her salary at that time was £6 a month. Forty-one years and one month later we are saying farewell to Colleen Elliott, someone who has devoted her entire working life to this University and has seen it grow and change in many different ways.

Angie

In April 1950, after seven years of secretarial work, Miss Elliott was appointed Assistant to the Registrar, post she held until 1953, when she was appointed Registration Clerk. During 1953 she also served as Assistant Registrar for eight months. In January, 1960, she was promoted to Clerk Grade I, and has held that position ever since.

In her years at Rhodes she has missed work through illness on only three occasions - a remarkable record. Her efficiency and devotion to duty have carried her through the years and provided Rhodes with a consistent and reliable records system. She has always worked particularly hard during registration and examination periods and has developed a detailed knowledge of the University and its students. There can be few members of staff here who have seen as many students pass through our doors as she has done.

Her encyclopaedic knowledge about practically every student on her files has become almost a legend at Rhodes. This knowledge could not have grown had she not taken an interest in the people behind the names on her cards.

I know that she will be missed at Rhodes for many reasons, but those with a sweet tooth and no need to diet will miss her particularly. She has always had a good supply of sweets in a drawer of her desk and doled them out liberally to a number of people, both students and staff.

Why did I only get to hear of that now: sweet tooth

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Miss Elliott's whole life has been spent in Grahamstown, in fact, I am told that she still lives in the house in which she spent her childhood. She received her schooling at Victoria Girls High School, where she was a champion tennis player in her final year. Tennis continued to be an interest for a number of years after she left school. After her years at VGHS, the move to Rhodes when she first came to work here was not, geographically, a great one.

Perhaps her tennis-playing contributed to the good health that has given her such an impressive work record, but walking to work each day probably has something to do with it too. Until 1962, when she bought a car, Miss Elliott walked to work and home again twice each day. After the acquisition of her car she continued to walk to work in the morning, only using the car to come back after lunch. If one takes into account the fact that she has hardly ever missed work, the total number of kilometres she has walked must be a rather impressive figure.

Miss Elliott's loyalty to Grahamstown and Rhodes University, ^{extended over so long a period} is a rare quality. The fact that she has always been content to remain here, particularly in this age of rapid travel and frenetic activity is also remarkable.

~~very~~
I know that all those present will join me in wishing you well in your years of retirement, Miss Elliott. We hope that you will now find time to catch up on your reading, one of the great interests in your life. We thank you for the hard and meticulous work you have undertaken for so long.

Since you will continue to be living in Gtown, we shall not entirely lose sight of you

→ Woodbridge

Mrs Hilton-Green brought me this letter written by Mr Woodbridge, who was Examinations Officer here for \pm 30 years, and knew Miss Elliott very well. She thought you might like to read it out at the end of your speech.

8, Robert Str
Grahamstown

26/2/85

Dear Judy,

Thank you very much for your very kind invitation to attend the farewell party being given to Colleen Elliott.

I would dearly have loved to have been present but have made arrangements to visit my daughter in Mossel Bay for a week or so and will be leaving Grahamstown on Thursday of this week.

In the course of my main functions at Rhodes, organising examinations and graduation ceremonies, for so much of the information I required I relied on Colleen. She seemed always to have everything I wanted at her finger-tips and information was supplied with unfailing courtesy making my job so much easier. To her I owe a debt of gratitude.

I wish her a long and happy retirement and hope she is as contented in that as she was in her work.

Rhodes is going to miss Colleen Elliott. Her replacement in much of the work with which she was involved, i.e. the computer, will not have that personal touch which Colleen had.

Best wishes to all,

Sincerely,

Woody