



VICE-CHANCELLOR'S MESSAGE TO NEW STUDENTS - 1977

It is my pleasure to offer a very warm welcome to all new students attending Rhodes for the first time. Rhodians are proud people. They are proud of their university, proud of their traditions and proud of the achievements of those who have gone before them. You are now Rhodians and we who are already Rhodians expect a great deal of you. We expect you to uphold the good name of the University in your academic achievements, in your^{athletic} endeavours, in your extra-mural activities, in your concern for the wellbeing and convenience of others, and in your conduct both on and off the University precincts.

The extent to which you profit from your years at Rhodes rests very largely in your own hands. There is not much emphasis on compulsion in the university ethos. One largely sets one's own goals and the extent to which one reaches or falls short of the target depends on the degree of effort you are prepared to expend. Be ambitious with your goals: aim high and do not be content with second best, either in yourself or in others; but move particularly in yourself. Ultimate and longterm goals have to be broken down into yearly, monthly, weekly, even daily subgoals. A serious commitment to earn a degree three or four years from now must be translated into a series of lesser commitments to complete certain assignments in the current week, for example, which in turn implies setting aside time for reading and study each day. Otherwise, your commitment is meaningless. A journey of a thousand kilometres

begins with the first step, as the old Chinese proverb goes.

Students are young people full of vigour, initiative and joie-de-vivre. You are going to enjoy yourselves, no matter what "the system" says or does. Thank God for it: the world would be a very dull place without students. Let me urge you however, never in your lighter moments of recreation to let your exuberance be at the expense of others. It is not always easy to keep in mind, but not everybody in Grahamstown is a student. Excessive noise late at night, overindulgence in alcohol or other forms of arrogant or boorish behaviour do not endear students to the townsfolk, and in any case are not necessary concomitants to enjoying oneself.

The year 1977 is not going to be an easy one either for the country or for the university. We are going through a period of necessary, though often painful, adjustment. Both as individuals and as an institution we shall have to learn to make do on rather fewer financial resources than we have become accustomed to. We shall also have to accommodate ourselves to the concept that certain privileges that we have regarded as part of our birthright may not always be ours in the future.

A time of limited adversity and stringency is also a time of opportunity. It enables us to take stock of ourselves, to decide what is essential in our lives and what is merely

convenient or enjoyable. Use your time at university wisely. Take stock of yourself, determine worthwhile goals and strive for them wholeheartedly. Participate fully in all that university life has to offer you, and prepare yourselves to make a solid contribution to the juster and more peaceful Southern Africa to which we all aspire. Above all, cultivate a sense of balance and harmony in all that you undertake. You will then emerge from your experience at Rhodes a fully integrated human being, prepared intellectually, emotionally and physically to make your contribution to society. .