

AS PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR AND AS A FELLOW RHODIAN IT IS MY PRIVILEGE AND PLEASURE TO OFFER YOU A DOUBLE WELCOME, FIRSTLY TO THE ORIENTATION WEEK AND SECONDLY TO THE UNIVERSITY AS A WHOLE. AS NEW STUDENTS YOU HAVE BEEN REQUESTED TO ARRIVE ABOUT A WEEK EARLIER THAN THE RETURNING STUDENTS, SO THAT YOU MAY ACCLIMATIZE YOURSELVES TO YOUR NEW SURROUNDINGS, ASK ALL THE QUESTIONS AND GAIN ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED IN ORDER TO MAKE, OR CONFIRM, THE CHOICES YOU SHOULD SELECT, OUT OF THE MYRIAD OF OPTIONS BEFORE YOU, TO MAKE A SUCCESS OF YOUR FIRST YEAR AT RHODES. YOU WILL BE ABLE TO DO THIS BEFORE BEING DISTRACTED BY THE MORE SENIOR STUDENTS WHO KNOW, OR WHO IMAGINE THEY KNOW, ALL THAT THERE IS TO BE KNOWN ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY. THE

2

ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND PARTICIPANTS, BOTH STAFF AND STUDENTS, UNDER THE ABLE GUIDANCE AND LEADERSHIP OF MR PETER SURTEES, MISS JENNY BOWEN AND MISS JANE PARGITER, HAVE DRAWN UP AN INTERESTING AND WIDE-RANGING PROGRAMME, THE DETAILS OF WHICH ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR BROCHURE. WE ALL OWE THEM A DEBT OF GRATITUDE, WHICH WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO ACKNOWLEDGE IN THE USUAL WAY.

SOME OF YOU WILL HAVE COME WITH VERY FIRM IDEAS AS TO WHICH SUBJECTS YOU WISH TO STUDY. OTHERS ARE NOT SO CERTAIN AND MAY FEEL THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SUFFICIENTLY FULLY INFORMED, ESPECIALLY ABOUT SUBJECTS WHICH ARE NOT CONTINUATIONS OF THOSE OFFERED AT SECONDARY SCHOOL. IN YOUR PROGRAMME YOU WILL FIND INTRODUCTORY TALKS OFFERED ABOUT MOST OF THE SUBJECTS TAUGHT HERE, FROM ACCOUNTING TO ZOOLOGY. WHY NOT ATTEND AS MANY OF THESE AS YOU CAN CONVENIENTLY FIT IN, EVEN IF YOU YOURSELF

MAY NOT BE SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATING THE POSSIBILITY OF STUDYING ALL OF THEM? AT THE VERY LEAST IT MAY SATISFY YOUR CURIOSITY, HELP YOU TO REALISE WHAT A MULTI-FACETTED PLACE A UNIVERSITY IS AND ENABLE YOU TO HAVE SOMETHING OF AN INKLING AS TO WHAT SOME OF YOUR FRIENDS ARE BUSY WITH.

ALL OF YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW ASPECTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OTHER THAN THE SUBJECTS OFFERED, SUCH AS HOW TO USE THE LIBRARY OR THE COMPUTER, THE ROLE OF TUTORIALS, HOW WE LOOK AT DISCIPLINE, WHAT SPORTS AND SOCIETIES ARE AVAILABLE, WHAT ABOUT RAG, AND SO ON AND SO ON. IT IS ALL THERE IN THE PROGRAMME.

BEYOND THE IMMEDIATE IMPLICATIONS OF ORIENTATION WEEK THERE IS OF COURSE YOUR FIRST YEAR OF STUDY AND AFTER THAT THE REST OF YOUR STAY

AT RHODES. WHAT SORT OF A UNIVERSITY IS RHODES AND WHAT SORT OF PLACE IS GRAHAMSTOWN? THEIR CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC IS THAT BOTH ARE SMALL IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES AND UNIVERSITY CITIES. WE BELIEVE THAT ON THE WHOLE THIS IS A VERY GREAT ADVANTAGE, BOTH SOCIALLY AND ACADEMICALLY. "SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL" IS MORE THAN A SLOGAN HERE : IT IS A WAY OF LIFE. YOU WILL NOT FEEL OPPRESSED AND OVERWHELMED, LIKE AN INSIGNIFICANT COG IN A VERY LARGE MACHINE. CLASSES ARE SMALL, ESPECIALLY TUTORIALS, RESIDENCES ARE SMALL, AND SO YOUR PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION REALLY DOES COUNT FOR SOMETHING. BECAUSE EVERYBODY LIVES ON OR WITHIN EASY ACCESS OF THE CAMPUS, WE ARE VERY MUCH A 24-HOUR COMMUNITY AND NOT A NINE-TO-FIVE KNOWLEDGE FACTORY.

LET US CONSIDER BRIEFLY SOME STATISTICS. RHODES HAS ABOUT 1000 STAFF MEMBERS, OF WHOM ABOUT 240 ARE ACADEMICS AND RESEARCHERS. THERE ARE

JUST OVER 3000 STUDENTS, WHICH MAKES IT $1/5$ TO $1/3$ THE SIZE OF SOME OF THE ALTERNATIVES YOU COULD HAVE CHOSEN. THE STUDENTS COME FROM ALL OVER SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE WIDE SPECTRUM OF GEOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE PEOPLE YOU WILL MEET IS SOMETHING OF AN EDUCATION IN ITSELF. AT RHODES ONLY ABOUT 7% OF THE STUDENT BODY ARE "HOMETOWN BOYS AND GIRLS". APPROXIMATELY $1/3$ HAIL FROM THE EASTERN CAPE. THE REST COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE, WITH PARTICULARLY LARGE CONTINGENTS FROM THE TRANSVAAL AND ZIMBABWE. CONTRAST THIS WITH THE SITUATION AT THE LARGER UNIVERSITIES. IN THESE CASES 75-90% COME FROM THE IMMEDIATE METROPOLITAN AREA, AND TEND TO BE COMMUTERS WHO LIVE AT HOME. THESE VERY FACTS MAY BE AMONGST THE REASONS WHY YOU CHOSE TO COME TO RHODES.

WHAT ABOUT GRAHAMSTOWN ITSELF, THIS SOMEWHAT ISOLATED AND PROUD LITTLE C..Y? IF YOU ARE SEEING GRAHAMSTOWN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1983 IT IS RATHER HARD TO IMAGINE THAT FOR A GOOD PORTION OF THE 19TH CENTURY IT WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMUNITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AFTER CAPE TOWN. A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY OF THE LAST CENTURY WAS ENACTED HERE IN THE EASTERN CAPE. PEOPLE TEND TO BE VERY HISTORICALLY MINDED, AND IN SOME WAYS IT COULD STILL BE DESCRIBED AS A 19TH CENTURY COMMUNITY, AS WITNESS THE HIGH PROFILE ENJOYED BY DONKEY CARTS AND STEAM ENGINES. WHEN YOU HEAR TALK OF THE SIXTIES OR SEVENTIES, IT IS NOT NECESSARILY ABOUT THE 1960'S OR 1970'S. YOU WILL FIND BUILDINGS BOTH ON THE CAMPUS AND IN THE CITY THAT DATE BACK 170 YEARS. AS IS QUITE PROPER THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF INTERESTING MUSEUMS HERE, WHICH ARE WELL WORTH YOUR WHILE EXPLORING. INDEED, SOME GRAHAMSTOWN-WATCHERS HAVE EVEN GONE SO FAR TO IMPLY THAT THE WHOLE

PLACE IS A BIG OPEN-AIR MUSEUM. BE THAT AS IT MAY, STUDENTS SOMETIMES TEND TO FORGET THAT THERE IS SENTIENT HUMAN EXISTENCE OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE CAMPUS, AND THAT CITIZENS AS WELL AS STUDENTS HAVE THEIR RIGHTS. IT IS ESPECIALLY EASY TO FORGET THIS AT RAG OR INTERVARSITY OR AFTER YOU HAVE CELEBRATED A BIRTHDAY OR OTHER IMPORTANT OCCASION IN YOUR LIFE. OTHERWISE YOU MAY TEMPT THE GOOD CITIZENS TO AGREE WITH THE OLD SHEPHERD IN SHAKESPEARE'S WINTER'S TALE, WHO MUSED THAT:

"I WOULD THERE WERE NO AGE BETWEEN TEN AND THREE-AND-TWENTY, OR THAT YOUTH WOULD SLEEP OUT THE REST; FOR THERE IS NOTHING IN THE BETWEEN BUT GETTING WENCHES WITH CHILD, WRONGING THE ANCIENTRY, STEALING, FIGHTING - HARK YOU NOW? - WOULD ANY BUT THESE BOIL'D BRAINS OF NINETEEN AND TWO-AND-TWENTY HUNT THIS WEATHER?"

THE ONE DISADVANTAGE OF SMALLNESS, BOTH OF UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY, IS THAT IT IS TOO FATALLY EASY TO FIND YOURSELF DISPLAYING A HIGH PROFILE. FOR THIS REASON WHATEVER REPUTATION RHODES MAY HAVE FOR A HYPERTHYROID SOCIAL LIFE, INCLUDING TOO CLOSE AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH ALCOHOL, IS FAR FROM BEING ENTIRELY JUSTIFIED. IF YOU LIVE IN HILLBROW OR SEAPOINT YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING RATHER BIZARRE TO BE NOTICED AT ALL. HERE EVEN MILDLY EXTRAVAGANT BEHAVIOUR IS HIGHLY VISIBLE, AND LIKELY TO FIND ITS WAY INTO PRINT, PARTICULARLY AS IT IS GRIST FOR THE MILL TO ALL THE ASPIRANT INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS WHOM ONE FINDS SO THICK ON THE GROUND AT RHODES.

WHEN ALL THAT IS SAID, WE ARE NONETHELESS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER FORMS OF ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, SUCH AS EXCESSIVE NOISE, EXPERIMENTS WITH NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES AND IRRESPONSIBLE

DRIVING. I AM FULLY BEHIND COMMITTED STUDENT OPINION, MARSHALLED BY THE SRC IN THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL. YOU, THE NEW 1983 STUDENT INTAKE, NUMBERING ABOUT 825, MAKE UP MORE THAN A QUARTER OF THE STUDENT BODY. WHY NOT START OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT IN THIS RESPECT, AND SO LAUNCH A CHANGE OF ATTITUDE THAT WILL ULTIMATELY PERCOLATE RIGHT THROUGH THE STUDENT BODY?

YOU ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO DO SO, FOR YOU ARE A SELECT GROUP. BECAUSE OF ACCOMMODATION SHORTAGES WE HAVE TURNED AWAY ABOUT 100 PEOPLE WHO WOULD DEARLY HAVE LOVED TO HAVE BEEN AMONGST YOU THIS AFTERNOON. AS A CONSEQUENCE YOU ARE THE MOST INTELLECTUALLY QUALIFIED, AND WE HOPE, WISE STUDENT GROUP TO HAVE ENTERED RHODES FOR A VERY LONG TIME. ABOUT 90% OF YOU HAVE A D-AGGREGATE OR BETTER IN YOUR MATRICULATION RESULTS. YOUR LECTURERS KNOW THIS, AND THEY ARE

10

CONSEQUENTLY GOING TO REQUIRE OF YOU, AND RECEIVE, SOME ENHANCED STANDARDS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

IT IS SOMETIMES A USEFUL EXERCISE IN GETTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE TO TALK A LITTLE ABOUT MONEY. YOUR RESIDENCE AND ACADEMIC FEES AND OTHER INCIDENTAL EXPENSES ARE TYPICALLY GOING TO COST YOUR PARENTS OR YOUR BURSARY SPONSORS IN EXCESS OF R3000 PER ANNUM, BUT THAT IS ONLY THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG IN TERMS OF WHAT IT REALLY COSTS TO KEEP THE UNIVERSITY OPERATING. IN ROUND FIGURES THE GROSS COST IS IN EXCESS OF R24 000 000 PER ANNUM, OR RATHER MORE THAN R2 000 000 PER MONTH. ON A PER STUDENT BASIS THIS WORKS OUT AT ABOUT R8 000. THE R5 000 BALANCE COMES FROM THE TAXPAYER, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT FROM DONORS. THERE IS SOMETIMES A TENDANCY TO ASSUME THAT TAXPAYER'S MONEY IS FREE, LIKE THE AIR WE BREATHE. I HAVE OFTEN WISHED THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT

SUBSIDISE THE UNIVERSITIES AT ALL, BUT RATHER LEFT THEM TO RECOVER THE FULL OPERATING COSTS IN FEES. THE SUBSIDY MONEY COULD THEN GO TO THE PARENTS AS A LOAN, TO BE FORGIVEN IF THE STUDENT EVENTUALLY OBTAINED HIS DEGREE. THIS WOULD BRING HOME TO ALL CONCERNED THE TRUE STATE OF AFFAIRS. IT WOULD WONDERFULLY CONCENTRATE YOUR PARENT'S MINDS AND CONSEQUENTLY YOURS. NOBODY WOULD THEN BE IN ANY DOUBT, LEAST OF ALL THE STUDENT, THAT HIS MAIN BUSINESS IS SERIOUS STUDY. HIS SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND SPORTING ACTIVITIES, HIS MUSINGS AS TO THE ULTIMATE MEANING OF THINGS AND HIS LAUDABLY MOTIVATED, BUT SOMETIMES NOT ALWAYS MATURELY CONCEIVED, ENDEAVOURS INSTANTLY TO CONVERT SOUTH AFRICA IN PARTICULAR, AND THE WORLD IN GENERAL, INTO A JUSTER AND MORE HARMONIOUS PLACE, WOULD THEN HAVE TO BE MANAGED WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO STUDY.

THE RECONCILIATION OF YOUR OBLIGATION TO STUDY WITH ALL THE OTHER CONFLICTING CLAIMS ON YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION IS NOT AN EASY TASK, PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU HAVE TO WORK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF. YOU WILL NOT BE PROGRAMMED, AS YOU WERE AT SCHOOL. YOU ARE NOW A STUDENT, NOT A PUPIL. YOU MUST SET YOUR OWN STUDY PATTERNS AND OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES. YOU WILL NOT FIND SOMEBODY BREATHING DOWN YOUR NECK EVERY DAY REGULATING YOUR LIFE. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO COPE. HELP IS THERE FOR THE ASKING - FROM THE DEAN OF STUDENTS AND STUDENT ADVISER, THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAMME, LECTURERS, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS OR DEANS, THESE AUGUST GENTLEMEN ON THE PLATFORM WITH ME. BY AND LARGE, HOWEVER, THE INITIATIVE LIES WITH YOU. IT IS A HARD AND DEMANDING THING TO LEARN, BUT YOU WILL NEVER BE A MATURE ADULT UNLESS YOU DO, AND YOU WILL BE OF LITTLE USE TO YOURSELF OR ANYBODY ELSE. IF YOU CANNOT ORGANISE YOURSELF YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO ORGANISE ANYTHING ELSE.

WHAT I HAVE SAID DOES NOT IMPLY THAT THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EXERCISED OVER YOU. FAR FROM IT, BUT THAT AUTHORITY TENDS TO BE INDIRECT AND SOMETIMES A LITTLE DELAYED. WE PAY YOU THE COMPLIMENT OF ACCORDING YOU SUFFICIENT FREEDOM OF ACTION TO PROVE YOURSELF. OF COURSE, THE DAY OF RECKONING CANNOT BE PUT OFF FOREVER. WE DO INSIST ON CERTAIN MODEST MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS, SUCH AS THAT YOU PASS AT LEAST TWO OF THE FOUR OR FIVE SUBJECTS YOU MIGHT BE STUDYING, AND THAT YOU CONDUCT YOURSELF SUCH AS NOT TO INTERFERE WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND COMFORTS AND THEIR ENDEAVOURS TO STUDY, AND THUS DISRUPT COMMUNITY LIFE. IF YOU CANNOT RECONCILE YOURSELF TO THESE GROUND RULES, THEN EITHER YOU, OR PERHAPS WE, MIGHT DECIDE THAT RHODES AFTER ALL IS NOT THE PLACE FOR YOU.

THE VERY FACT THAT A UNIVERSITY IS SUCH A RELAXED AND NONAUTHORITATIVE PLACE SOMETIMES LEADS TO EXTRAVAGANT VIEWS ABOUT THE NATURE OF

AUTHORITY. IN THESE HEADY DAYS OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING IT IS PERHAPS TEMPTING TO QUESTION ALL AUTHORITY, WHETHER IT BE OF THE UNIVERSITY, THE EMPLOYER, PARENTS OR THE STATE. SUCH QUESTIONING HAS A LONG AND HONOURABLE HISTORY. WAS IT NOT THE EMINENT CAMBRIDGE HISTORIAN, LORD ACTON, WHO SAID "POWER TENDS TO CORRUPT AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY"? BEFORE WE GET TOO CARRIED AWAY IN THE INSULATED AND COCOONED ATMOSPHERE OF UNIVERSITY LIFE IT IS AS WELL TO CONTEMPLATE FOR A MOMENT A WORLD WITHOUT AUTHORITY. WOULD IT WORK? FOR BREVITY'S SAKE LET US LET ONE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S BETTER KNOWN CONTEMPORARY POETS, DOUGLAS LIVINGSTONE, ANSWER THAT:-

"IF ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS,

WHAT OF THE ABSOLUTE ABSENCE OF POWER?

SURELY, BEFORE SOMETHING ERUPTS

POWER SHOULD BE SPREAD; OR TOLLS THAT HOUR
WHEN THE BLADES OF LONG HUNGRY KNIVES DESCEND.
WE HAVE WROUGHT MUCH GOOD, HAVE MUCH TO DEFEND;
CERTAINLY, WE HAVE MUCH TO AMEND
BEFORE PSYCHOPATHS OF THE LEFT OR RIGHT
FORCE US TO SHARE - ETERNAL NIGHT."

WE AT RHODES ARE VERY PROUD OF OUR UNIVERSITY, ITS BEAUTIFUL SETTING,
ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS, ITS SCHOLARSHIP, ITS STAFF AND STUDENTS,
BOTH PAST AND PRESENT. IN A VERY SHORT TIME EACH ONE OF YOU WILL
BEGIN TO FEEL THIS SAME SENSE OF PRIDE AND BELONGING, FOR IT IS AN
INFECTIOUS VIRUS. YOU WILL BECOME AS ZEALOUS FOR THE REPUTATION AND
GOOD NAME OF RHODES AS ANY RHODIAN OF AN OLDER VINTAGE. YOU WILL WISH
TO CONTRIBUTE YOUR FULL SHARE TO THE ACCUMULATED ACHIEVEMENTS AND
SHARED EXPERIENCES THAT ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF ANY INSTITUTION.

16

AN EXCELLENT START WOULD BE TO PARTICIPATE ENTHUSIASTICALLY IN THE
ACTIVITIES OF ORIENTATION WEEK. YOU WILL THEN BE FULLY PREPARED TO
BUCKLE DOWN IN EARNEST WHEN YOU ATTEND YOUR FIRST LECTURES ON 23
FEBRUARY. TIME TENDS TO PASS WITH AMAZING SPEED, SO SEIZE YOUR
OPPORTUNITIES EARLY.

ON BEHALF OF ALL OF US ON THE PLATFORM, VICE-PRINCIPAL, REGISTRAR,
DEANS OF FACULTIES, DEAN OF STUDENT AND SRC PRESIDENT, I SHOULD LIKE
TO WISH EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU EVERY HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS AT
RHODES, AND TO DECLARE YOUR ORIENTATION WEEK FORMALLY OPEN.

D S HENDERSON

VICE-CHANCELLOR

14 FEBRUARY 1983