

SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, DR D S HENDERSON, AT LUNCHEON IN HONOUR
OF MR NEIL PAPENFUS ON TUESDAY 22 FEBRUARY 1983

The time has come for me to say a few words this afternoon, we have gathered here together as we are all aware to say goodbye to Neil and Pat Papenfus. This is of course, indeed, a sad occasion for us, but the sadness is tempered by the fact that they will continue to be part of Rhodes University. In fact goodbye is rather an ambiguous word and we really need to look at another language such as French to make a distinction. We are not saying adieu to Pat and Neil - we are rather saying au revoir and we really mean that - au revoir - until we see you again and I'm sure we will be seeing them frequently, perhaps not quite as frequently as we do today but still sufficiently frequently for us to be able to keep up a meaningful relationship - let me first of all tell you one or two formal items - Neil has been with Rhodes University in his fund raising capacity and then in the more general public relations capacity since 1970 and I was estimating in my mind how much in the way of funds - cash donations from donors has been raised since that time and I started doing a few little approximate calculations as I tend to do and I felt the figure was round about 6 million but knowing Neil exactly as I do I phoned him and I said Neil, how much have we collected in all the time that you have been here - and he said just a moment I have got the figures right here - it is six million three hundred and fifteen thousand rand. I think that that type of answer is very characteristic of Neil - I'm sure that he would be the first to admit that he is not single-handedly responsible for the accumulation of all that money but that modesty applied I'm sure to be absolutely correct to say that without Neil's yeoman efforts - what we would have collected would have been but a fraction of that total from our donors.

If I can continue - just a couple of years ago we decided that since the bulk of our donors's responses come from the southern Transvaal - it is obviously going to make sense for us to have a fund-raiser there - based in our Johannesburg office and we advertised but met with very little success - we tried again - we had a person there who decided not to stay very long. At this point the thought occurred to Neil - well, maybe it would be in the best interests of the university if he himself were to move to Johannesburg where after all the bulk of the work has to be done. And so, it will be not only in the university's interest and perhaps it will also relieve him of the tremendous amount of travel that he has had to do over the years. I did ask him to give me an estimate of about how many hundreds of thousands of kilometers he thought he had covered - this time he was not able to give me quite the same answer - he felt that it was of the order of thirty thousand kilometers per annum but let us say well over four hundred thousand kilometers of air travel in the time - in the 12 to 13 odd years that he has been with us. I feel that he deserves at least a golden disc or some sort

of recognition from S A Airways for this tremendous support that he had given to them over the years but he tells me that he has tried this but was not successful - and I then felt that the least he should try to squeeze out of them was that they should give him a high priority on seat 1 c or 1 d - something in the first row right next to the aisle so he can nip out as quickly as possible and he told me that he was going to take that idea up. So those then are the basic formal facts as to why Neil and Pat are going to be moving to Johannesburg.

Perhaps I can now turn onto a slightly less formal plane of thought - it does turn out - much to my surprise - when I did a little calculation in preparation for what I was going to say this morning - that Neil and I had known each other for no fewer than 28 years. We found ourselves both - in my case a temporary - in Neil's a more permanent Vry Stater in the summer of 1955 - it sounds a bit like a movie doesn't it? Well we both reached the acme of our cricket careers by being selected for the Free State Country Districts Eleven - that is what I think the closest either of us reached Neil was it not? to a true representative of cricket - and off we went to Pietermaritzburg to participate in the Country weekend there and Neil of course behaved himself a great deal better than I did and didn't get himself into trouble - I got myself into very severe trouble because we had a bye and a free day and there was a particularly attractive young girl from the Teachers' Training College which overlooked our field and who came along to watch us and I persuaded her to come down and spend a day on the beach in Durban. Well we got a lift down but on the way back we had to come back by SAR - unbeknown to me there had been a very severe landslide as a result of a cloudburst, and the track was covered.

The train was diverted onto the old line and instead of getting back at 7.30 I eventually got back to Pietermaritzburg at 11.30 and I had a very difficult task persuading an irate lady warden that all this was entirely outside my control. Since 1955 of course I have come to know Neil and then subsequently Pat a great deal better and as you know they are both loyal Old Rhodians and very much a part of our society.

Pat, if I can say a few words about her first, as you know - if I can find where I wrote this down, she is very important - I hope I haven't lost one of my pieces of paper here - anyway I remember the story very much - Pat is one of three outstanding and beautiful Dugmore sisters and when you think of this name, Dugmore, how 1820 can you get?? You probably have to be a Miles Bowker, or a Jeremiah Goldswain to be more 1820 than a Dugmore. And father Dugmore of course expected that his daughters, well even if they couldn't get a Goldswain, they would at least get sensible swain, such as Pringle or Long or Yendall or I'm sure the old man would have settled for even a Brown or a Smith. Imagine his consternation when one of his beautiful daughters first took up with a chap called John Sapperstein and a little while later another came home with a

Luigi Nassembeñi.

As each, one of these liaisons with his daughters was established the father became more and more nervous. You can imagine what his reaction was when a Neil Papenfus appeared.

I'm told that to begin with not even Pat could take this seriously when she saw this name on a cricket team notice board, she fell over with laughter. But I think it is a measure of Neil's determination that even this initial reaction certainly didn't perturb his ardour and the measure of his determination that he overcame all these objections. And that determination of course is still with him and still works for Rhodes University.

So in losing Pat and Neil Grahamstown are losing a couple that we have all grown to be fond of and respect in the time that we have known them. But of course Rhodes' loss - sorry Grahamstown's loss is not also Rhodes' loss as I have mentioned Rhodes will not be losing them - they are both a talented and well-matched couple and for my part - I'm sure that their moving to Johannesburg will mean that possibly paradoxically I might see more of them rather than less of them because Neil has already threatened that every time I come to Johannesburg he is going to rope me in to either talk to a luncheon group of business men or participate in an Old Rhodian Golf Reunion or something of the sort. So ladies and gentlemen on this sad occasion - the things that I mentioned at the beginning by the recognition that we will be seeing both Neil and Pat at not infrequent intervals back in Grahamstown and also when we go up to Johannesburg - if we call in at the office I am sure we will receive a very warm welcome - on that note I should like you all to take up your glasses and drink a brief toast to Neil and Pat -