



**university of natal**

**1975**

**GRADUATION  
ADDRESSES  
and  
CITATIONS**



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# *Foreword*

by

FRANCIS E. STOCK

*Vice-Chancellor and Principal,  
University of Natal*

*Annual University graduation ceremonies are occasions when the University presents degree certificates to new graduates, but they are also occasions when the University presents the results of its work in teaching to the public. The public is represented not merely by the parents and friends of the new graduates but also by representatives of civic authorities, industrialists and others.*

*The occasion is marked by graduation addresses by various distinguished speakers, leaders in their own particular field; while the University also seeks to honour those who have made a significant contribution to the humanities and sciences by the award of honorary degrees.*

*It is in recognition of the significance of the occasion that this booklet of addresses and citations is published and dedicated to all new graduates of the University of Natal on whom degrees were conferred in 1975.*





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**Address**  
**by**  
**Professor**  
**J. C. BON SMA**

formerly Head of  
Department of Animal Science  
University of Pretoria

*delivered in Pietermaritzburg  
on 10 May 1975*

Address by

Professor J. C. BONSMMA

Many years ago I read a *Physicians Bulletin*, Volume XII, No. 5 of September 1947. This paper had been prepared in response to many requests from medical people to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of insulin. In this bulletin homage is paid to Sir Frederick Grant Banting (1891 – 1941) and Charles Herbert Best C.B.E. (1899 – ) for the great work they did on the discovery of insulin. Many times have I read this paper and every time it served as an inspiration to me.

Firstly, Banting and Best had the qualities of young graduates that spell success. These men had fine qualities of mind and heart. Foremost of these were loyalty and curiosity. Loyalty is that sacred quality of character which binds one devotedly to a worthy cause, be it friendship, patriotism or the search for truth. Curiosity is that eager concern which prompts one to explore the darkness of the unknown in quest of light.

Banting and Best's devotion to truth, their persistent, intelligently directed effort to solve the problem of diabetes was an inspiration to me and my graduate students. But I got more than that out of this inspiring bulletin – Dr Macleod who was head of the Medical School at Toronto at that time was frankly sceptical about the whole research project of Banting and Best, but fortunately he was willing to waive his own opinions to give those research workers facilities to carry out the experiments. This was most important. We should avoid undue regimentation of scientific research – young researchers, investigators or students full of enthusiasm should be given the greatest possible free hand and should be allowed to carry out experiments as they see fit, in a manner that might not be approved in a thoroughly regimented system.



This *Physicians Bulletin* taught me that we older men in charge of research laboratories or science departments should be extremely cautious about exerting a dominant position or dictating in any way to the younger men working with us. We should simply be advisers and I do hope the graduands in these inspiring surrounds will confer upon me some licence to do a little preaching or advising.

It is my privilege of having sojourned on this exciting little globe some forty or more years longer than most of you graduands. It is a most privileged stay and still gives me a fullness of life which I do hope many of you may have the great privilege of experiencing.

To enable all of us, old and young, to experience a fullness of life which is interesting, joyful and rewarding, we must work out a plan or code for living.

The code that has given me so much joyful and interesting living for the past almost thirty years was mentioned to me by a man who at that time must have been in his late seventies and who still had a zest for living and a yearning for learning.

### *THE CODE*

*A Life-long Personal Development*

*B Generous Consideration for Others*

*C Due Service to Society*

You will promptly see this plan envisages man as a social being and that it embodies three concepts:

*Development*, dealing with the individual himself and which he can modify to adapt to his personal requirements or purposes.

*Consideration*, dealing with his conduct towards those with whom he comes in contact and his judgments concerning them. This is such an important concept to us who are teachers – it is so essential to observe every individual in the class and to note tokens of distress, disappointment or illness.

The *Service* concept deals with one's attitude and response towards the huge anonymous society of which one is a member.

The crux of this code is the use of these concepts in combination.

The concepts are non-controversial; they are easy to learn and recall; and their meaning, if not their full import, should register with every normal teenager.

The code does not deal with such matters as *success, happiness, peace of mind or how to stop worrying*, but the achievement of these desirable ends is closely associated with observance of its provisions.

The *Development* concept stands in the first place because it involves the smallest social unit, the person himself, and because a person's total education, however acquired, practically determines his performance in the other two fields. In any event he must take in before he can give out, this again is of especial importance to the teacher or professor:

*He who learns from one who has learnt all he has to teach, drinks from the green mantle of a stagnant pool, but he who learns from one engaged in learning drinks from the clear water of a running stream.*

This stresses the learning or development process of the educator.

Who is not impressed and fascinated by the spectacle of human growth and development?

We Animal Scientists make a complete study, physiologically and anatomically, of the growth and developmental processes in animals. How much more important is this in the case of the human being where the intellectual or mental concept is added to growth and development. Even before you were born your parents and others were deeply interested in you, that you should arrive safely, grow up to be healthy and strong and be shielded from harm.

Society is concerned about the developmental processes of its young people, preparing youth to take their places in the world and carry forward its work. Education of youth is one of the chief concerns of the State and should be its major expense. Without this transfer of thought and experience from parents, teachers and books to children, accumulated knowledge and culture of the race would be lost in a generation.

It is to be regretted that so many young people the world over try to break down traditions and culture which have been built up over centuries. We should recognise one cardinal fact – that nobody has the right to destroy tradition, culture or government unless they can replace it by something better. The British comedian who writes under the nom-de-plume Nosmo King, derived from the many No Smoking signs which appear on stages, put this so beautifully in a poem called *Values*, which I will partly quote –

*The world is full of sons of discontent,  
Wealth without work their futile, feverish bent,  
Fortune by lucky chance, the chains of toil to sever,  
Heedless of primal law – by sweat and stern endeavour,  
The task takes second place, the pay is all that matters,  
The dream of easy cash their resolution scatters;  
Less hours of work, more of uneasy leisure,  
Pursuing joylessly the costly myth of pleasure.  
What part have I in all this restless quest,  
Where only that which costs the most is best,  
Where values are in glitter and display,  
Where men are judged by what they have to pay?*

There is much more in life than this – the precious gift of work and life-long personal development. You graduands will find that you will get some of your very best education after you leave University and you enter upon your career. Today practically all the better institutions which employ young people have training programs in which character and leadership are fostered and, under the urge of competition, rapidly developed.



Character and ability are both measures of intelligence and are developed through contact and performance. They are the attributes which determine a person's social value and of the two character is the more important because it embraces the basic virtues of honesty, fairness, dependability and diligence, without which progress in life is impossible.

It remains now for me to dwell briefly on the word *life-long*. Even before his schooldays are over, a person must sense he is in the last analysis the captain of his ship and fate.

A person, upon leaving university, after deducting time spent at work and asleep, has more than one-hundred-thousand evening hours at his disposal up to age seventy, the average life-span. This is a fair allotment of time which should not be frittered away, but should in good part be used to develop one's talents, and to build the broad inventory of knowledge which is not only invaluable socially, but indispensable to the achievement of true insight into people and the nature of things.

In research I so often mention the fact that reflection upon one's work means meditation, contemplation, reading and communication with others. A proper amount of *being alone* is the best way to discover, develop and enjoy one's faculties. Time taken out for quiet reflection is what has produced most of our significant ideas and inventions. Make full use of your imagination and originality, your God-given talents.

Continuous absorption of knowledge however, without any radiation is sterile and ungenerous. Emerson said it well:

*Rings and jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only true gift is a portion of thyself. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the heart: love, kindness, joy, understanding, sympathy, tolerance, forgiveness. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the mind: ideas, dreams, purposes, ideals, principles, plans, inventions, projects, poetry . . . .*

Those are the real gifts the teacher can give his pupils.



Now we come to the *Consideration* concept – consideration, a truly Olympian word, calm yet tremendous in scope, possessing warmth without sentimentality, embracing every maxim, rule, commandment and law relating to moral conduct.

This concept requires of a person the ability to put himself in the other fellow's place; it calls for mutual recognition of the dignity of the individual. The term *others* is meant to include all with whom we come in contact, irrespective of race, beliefs or position in society; it covers particularly people who are not in a position to assert or defend themselves. Of the three concepts this one requires the most insight and finesse, because it involves our contact and association with all sorts of personalities, including the opposite sex, older and younger people and people of other races, colours and creeds. Though it is the area in which most of our problems are likely to occur, it is also the one which brings the deep rewards of attachment and friendship.

People are entitled to consideration because in most cases their good qualities greatly outweigh their faults. Overemphasis of the negative is a fallacious, damaging habit of thought. We know how important a feeling of significance is to everybody. People should be commended when they do things well. Deficiencies in people require an understanding attitude; in judging situations we must take into consideration a person's background and earlier opportunities and training. My many years as a professor have taught me one thing – there are many problem parents.

Hardly anything is surer than that a tactless approach will produce a blunt or rude response, and that courtesy is generally repaid in kind. In life we usually get what we give; we can make friends only by being friendly.

A person's career is determined largely by his skill in getting along with his associates. At university level it is essential for the teacher to gain the goodwill of his students. So often students' grades suffer as a result of illness, family, financial or other problems, and if the professor is sympathetic and considerate towards his students they will confide in him and counsel with him. There is no greater reward in teaching than

producing graduates of character and quality and experiencing their goodwill.

The *Consideration* concept works, as testing will confirm.

The final category is *Due Service to Society*. The word *Due* is used in its two senses — firstly, that the service is owed to society, and secondly, that the individual contributes duly, that is in accordance with his abilities and God-given talents.

Why is service due to society? One has merely to look around and perceive that one is surrounded by manmade creations — one's home and the roughly twenty-thousand or more articles which it contains, buildings, streets, motorways, motorcars, tools, toys, foods, medicines, etc. These objects are there to make life easier for us and we have contributed nothing, except perhaps by purchasing certain articles which we require for our well-being.

How much gratitude do we owe a man like Edison who invented the electric light? All such inventions of the past are directly or indirectly related to man's well-being and survival.

Reflect upon the heritage of the past, the gift of language and writings — men such as Aristotle, Archimedes, Newton, Faraday, Leonardo da Vinci, Darwin, Wallace, Fleming, Banting, Huxley and Einstein, to name only a few who have done so much to shape, improve and prolong our lives. Then ask yourself: *What have I done toward providing any of the things that are so completely part of my daily existence?* The answer in most cases is certainly *nothing*, but we tend to take things for granted, as part of the scene, forgetting that they involve the work of other people. In most cases we have no conception of the planning and perseverance, the hard work, the capital investment, the elaborate machinery and complex know-how required to produce even the simplest articles vital to our lives.

What then is the conclusion? That everyone should, in the spirit of fair play and reciprocity, present or latent in most individuals, contribute to the best of his ability in return for all he gets from society. This reasoning shatters the idea that

the world owes us a living. The actual situation is that others, completely unknown to us, create practically everything we use in our living and that we must give in return — we have debts or dues to society. In fairness everyone must pull his oar during his normally active years. *Due* in the English language has two meanings, namely, *indebtedness* and *adequate*, so let us pay in fair measure that which we owe society for services rendered. Do not be a free-loader.

This code can bring satisfaction and meaning to life without being applied in an over-zealous manner. It is but a quiet appeal to reason, a road sign to guide the traveller on his way. One needs but to recall its three key words — *Development*, *Consideration* and *Service*.

A final quote from Farrar for the graduands:

*Knowledge, without common sense is folly; without method it is waste; without kindness it is fanaticism; without religion it is death. But with common sense it is wisdom; with method it is power; with charity it is beneficence; with religion it is virtue and life and peace.*







**Address**  
**by**  
**Dr. E. CREE**

Chief Conductor  
Durban Symphony Orchestra

*delivered in Durban  
on 11 April 1975*

Address by

Dr E. CREE

The other day I decided to prune one of my trees, but I forgot to tell my wife what I was going to do. So when tea-time came around she formed a one-woman search party, and finding me up a tree said, somewhat dramatically, *What on Earth are you doing?* . . . to which I replied, rather stupidly *I'm not on Earth, I'm up a tree!* Some time later I had to go to the local store, and there I found a woman screaming at her hysterical child . . . *What on Earth do you want?* Two popular clichés, yes . . . *What on Earth are we doing?* and *What on Earth do we want?* But may we now, as a premise from which to shoot-off in all kinds of obscure directions, take these words at face value.

What on *Earth* are we doing?

Making a hell-of-a mess of it, by all accounts! . . . and for reasons that are not always obvious . . . not the least of which being that we have for too long allowed our lives to be shaped and controlled by those who have what I call *the Euclidean mind*. You know the kind (the horrible thought occurs to me that you might be the kind) who always want to straighten things out, have them catalogued and put into boxes; unimaginative people who live by *the straight and narrow*, and who, being quite oblivious to constantly changing circumstances, take the square-root of life, and are quite surprised when the answer turns out to be a *lemon!* These people are everywhere . . . in low places and in high places. They lack natural talent and real sensitivity, because they have substituted systems and symbols for the natural and the real . . . confusing money with wealth, figures with facts, thoughts with things and words with deeds.

I blame the ancient Greeks, and dear Mr Euclid for these people . . . the Greeks for their superstition that there are

three dimensions of space and Euclid for his brutally oversimplified fantasies of a world consisting of points, lines, surfaces, circles and cubes. But Euclid was a dreamer who worked out a so-called geometry which had nothing to do with the measuring of the earth, but only with working out the rules of his own rather rigid and simple mind. The earth, as far as I know, doesn't move in straight lines, it wiggles; water streams and forms into waves; and nature in general dances and swings . . . trees, butterflies, even snakes in their own particular way. But Euclid's mind didn't get that far . . . it never got as far as the biological level. And so generation upon generation of schoolchildren have been bamboozled into believing that a straight line is simpler, and therefore, mark you, more intelligent than a wiggle; with the result that, ever after, people have been trying frantically to equate all experience, knowledge and action to the supposed clarity and intelligibility of straight lines. But does a mountaineer climb straight up a mountain? Or a yachtsman sail straight into wind? Water, even light, indeed all forms of energy follow gravity, they don't force their way through objects in an attempt to follow straight lines . . . and are we so brilliant now that we can afford to ignore the lesson of nature?

You now suspect that I'm trying to blind you with scientific argument. All right! then what has the Euclidean mind done for us in everyday life?

Food: it's even beginning to look like machinery. Most bread is a kind of plastic, chickens taste like papier-maché because they're fed on chemicals and bred in prisons. Milk is homogenized — which I'm sorry about because I rather like the word — and cheese is little more than a textureless glob. I'm told they're even trying to grow cubic tomatoes so that they can be more easily packed into cubic boxes and stored away in cubic warehouses. Then there's the shell-less egg; and the branchless tree, chemically stained from birth, from which to make straight planks without knots or wiggles. Work is monotonous. People are paid to arrange things in little boxes; paid for recording those arrangements on squared and columned sheets of paper — in triplicate, of course; paid for welding and drilling innumerable beams together to make bigger and better boxes for other people to get bored in; paid to . . . oh, never mind! But why do they do it? Naturally, to buy their



own box in which to live, and another box in which to travel, and with what's left to buy boxes of food, drugs and all kinds of medical aids.

Well, I must now begin to sound like a preacher, so, what on *Earth are* the churches doing? Talking! Talking about obeying commandments, and about believing in verbalized statements or creeds presuming to define the ineffable, and doing all too little to encourage silent worship . . . meditation . . . contemplation, which I think is tremendously important, indeed vital to the achievement of spiritual enlightenment.

My father once dragged me out for one of his walking tours on the Yorkshire moors — he was a great walker. On the way back we decided to take-in Evensong at York Minster. I dutifully took part in the whole service, reciting the Creed, mumbling the prayers, singing what I could of the hymns. But my father just sat, not even attempting to open his mouth. So, as we passed through the magnificent doors of that famous West front, I attacked him . . . why did he always have to be different? . . . Why didn't he join in the service with the rest of us? *My boy* he said *I prefer to listen to God rather than to shout at him.* And he's right, of course. Real religion has nothing what-so-ever to do with words . . . it's a silent, effortless and fascinating concentration on the basic energy, the fundamental and musical vibration of the world . . . which, as St. Thomas Aquinas might have said, is what men *call God*. You *do* religion as you breathe slowly and happily or listen to a bird in the early morning, or ride on a surfboard on the exact dynamic centres of a colossal wave. That's religion. And if you *do* it properly every minute of your life you don't have time to talk about it.

And what on *Earth are* we doing about wars? Oh, we're still having those . . . and for the same reasons . . . in the name of religion, ideology, progress, racial purity and patriotism . . . the latter not to be confused with the love of one's country, simply the idea of one's country . . . the flag, the crown, the ikon, the swastika, the little red book and other ridiculous baubles. Pointing a finger at the moon, we do so often mistake the finger for the moon, don't we? Or as Roy Campbell put it in some marvellous lines, which you can find in his book on South African Novelists:



*They praise the firm restraint with which you write.  
I'm with you there of course.  
You use the snaffle and the curb alright,  
But where's the bloody horse?*

Yes . . . what on Earth are we doing? I just don't know any more.

What is the point of Progress if the food is tasteless, the work monotonous, religion just talk, the sex mechanical, wars inevitable and the water so polluted that even the fish are giving up? Does anybody know? . . . except, perhaps, a few simple-minded people who live to smell flowers, to listen to the sea, to watch trees in the wind, to climb mountains, to eat fresh food, drink good wine and cuddle up against a warm, lovely girl.

You are now, of course, thoroughly depressed. I've painted an ugly picture of practically everything under the sun . . . pointing a finger, not at the moon, but at the finger itself. But I've done it deliberately, and with grossly exaggerated illustrations, to shock you into seeing that all is not right on Earth, and that now you have achieved academic success it's not enough to settle down comfortably into what Heidegger called *the triviality of everydayness*, in a suffocating world of personal preoccupation.

But what on Earth do we want? We must know this if we're to use our lives to good purpose. Oh, I know, we've done something rather vaguely about such things as happiness, love, goodness, service to others, fun, fame and fortune, peace, even God — but I fear that we have more words than we have experience for what we mean.

Now, by almighty arrogance, I'm going to tell you what on *Earth* I want, in the hope that you, yourselves, might be encouraged to make bigger and better lists. And, Sir, I'm going to start right on the University campus, by suggesting, in all seriousness, that every candidate for entrance to the University be required to write an essay on his or her idea of heaven . . . and that this paper be assessed for consistency, imagination and feasibility.

I should also like to have every member of the University, professor and student alike, take part in some artistic activity on the campus . . . preferably music, which I believe to be the most subtle, attractive and readily acceptable medium for the expression of man's emotional nature, a part of his make-up which is too often overlooked in University life. I think you'll agree that the physical nature is well looked after on the sports field, the moral in church and the intellectual in class . . . but the emotional nature is usually left to look after itself, and, thus neglected, doesn't just disappear, but goes underground, as it were, and shows itself in all kinds of phobias and complexes. A man can be physically perfect, morally upright and intellectually the envy of his colleagues, but if his emotional nature is undeveloped then he's an incomplete being, unbalanced, and there's a reasonable chance that he'll be more of a menace than an asset to society. So let us have student orchestras and choirs, however bad, professorial quartets and quintettes, however good, opera and ballet classes galore, and all made up of teachers, mathematicians, lawyers, chemists, engineers and other civilized, well-integrated beings. There's also, of course, the University Music Society for those who realise that to be even exposed to good music in performance by others is a form of emotional self expression, by reflection. Aristotle said of listening to music that it was a power in the formation of character.

Now, what on Earth else do I want? Well, I want to have lots of time to sit quietly, developing my intellect to a point when I can reach above it into an area of the intuitional, where I don't just have to *believe* . . . I shall *know*.

I want to empty myself of anxiety, and turn it into laughter.

I want a beautiful female companion, who will obey me and admire me, but just as easily object to me, showing that she can do so many things better than I can.

I want to give faithful interpretations of musical masterpieces to millions of people who can't live without them . . . but also to just one person if it will help him.

I want to sit on the beach and listen to the sea, and look at the sky, and shoot arrows so high into the air that they become birds.

I want to sail on endless seas, in nothing.

I want to see mountains and forests, and listen to unseen waterfalls at night.

I want to write books and music that will help people to live more fully.

I want to relieve suffering with my hands.

I want to make a large log fire of an evening, and listen to Schubert, Mozart, Stravinsky and Messiaen, sitting in the cocoon of a high-backed chair, in a silk smoking jacket.

I want always to have a good cognac handy, after even a modest meal.

I want to see the reflection of light in glass and crystal, and living on the ground, to look up at the trees making a pattern in the sky, at night to go to sleep underneath them, to wake before dawn to see the stars as they slowly disappear.

I want a good draught beer, and a ripe Stilton cheese . . .

Quite Earthy, isn't it, for someone's idea of heaven.

But wait a moment . . . what I want *most of all* is to believe in God with the same certainty as the goldfish swimming around in its bowl, who said:

*Of course there's a God . . .  
who changes the water?*







**Address**  
**by**  
**The Hon. Mr. Justice**  
**D. L. L. SHEARER**

*delivered in Pietermaritzburg  
on 9 May 1975*

Address by

Mr Justice SHEARER

I thank you, Mr Vice-Chancellor, for the honour you do me in your invitation to address this august and colourful assembly on this the most formal occasion of the academic year. For me it is an occasion loaded heavily with sentiment, as it was in Pietermaritzburg that I started as a student and in Pietermaritzburg that I graduated before proceeding to now foreign climes and another university.

When I was a student here, Pietermaritzburg was regarded as the main focus of the Natal University College, later to become the University of Natal. It is with pride that I recall that my late father, then a Member of Parliament, was entrusted by Dr Malherbe, who was then Principal, with the happy task of introducing and steering the University of Natal Bill through the House of Assembly. In a sense, too, I have a link with the very first days of the University. I was taught such Latin as I ever knew by Professor Petrie, one of the founder members of its staff, who is still, I am delighted to say, even at his great age, blessed with all the wit, charm and felicity of phrase and manner that characterised his teaching career. I recall with affection his parting words to me when I left to become a student at his old University: *Remember, my boy, that Cambridge is beautiful in parts, but what a whole Oxford is*, delivered with that sibillant chuckle we all grew to love.

And so it is with great pleasure and a strong sense of privilege that I congratulate all from the Pietermaritzburg campus who have graduated this evening and received the formal and documentary recognition of their academic achievement. For a large number of you this will, regretfully, be the end of the academic story. For others, it is only part of the beginning of a long and exciting life of interest and discovery,

whether it be in the field of art, literature, drama or of an even more intimate involvement in human relationships or problems. That is what education is all about — the art of living fruitfully and teaching or helping others to live fruitfully. Of course the fruit differs in kind, in quality and, to the more mercenary, in quantity.

I address myself this evening mainly to those for whom their first degree is their last, for the list of graduates shows that the proportion of students who proceed to post-graduate degrees is small indeed. Your university careers have been subsidised by the community in which we live. That subsidy comes from public funds to which every adult member of the community contributes, whatever his colour and however humble his condition. The fees paid by a parent or sponsor constitute substantially less than half of the cost of educating a student. It is therefore a privilege to attend the university — a privilege in which the community has a continuing interest. And privilege carries with it a corresponding moral obligation of service to that same community. A degree is not something to be worn like a badge — for if what you have learned is promptly discarded your degree will have lost all real significance.

I have used the expression *service to the community*. Perhaps this expression has overtones of a rather stilted moral rectitude which I certainly do not intend. I simply mean that you should, whatever course your life takes, continue to make use of the increased awareness of truth, beauty and justice which you should have acquired here. This is another way of saying that each of you should by now have developed a keen artistic conscience and an active and frank social conscience. Both involve a recognition of truth and all that it implies, for truth is the cornerstone of every facet of university teaching.

The artistic conscience is concerned to appreciate and appraise more subtly and perceptively creative works, in whatever field of artistic endeavour they lie. The social conscience is concerned with the satisfactory regulation of human relationships and the meaningful integration of the individual into society. Each of these involves the exercise of a judgment which is conditioned by your university education



*right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust, valuable or valueless.* This is of course an oversimplification, as is my dichotomy of the *conscience*. There are infinite shadings of judgment between the extremes, and the artistic and the social overlap and merge in the finest fruits of civilisation. What the university has done for you is, I hope, to train the thought processes by which you reach those judgments. It will not be long before nearly all of the facts which you have learned for examination purposes have evaporated from recollection, but if you have learned to think constructively and critically, the university life has given you something infinitely precious, which you should continue to use and cherish.

This is a young country, and, because of that, it lacks the richness of cultural activity which in European countries has been sculptured from centuries of creative thought. Ours is a raw, but nonetheless robust, culture and its future lies in your hands. This is an English-speaking university and it is sad to report that generally speaking, we English-speaking South Africans are culturally apathetic. The educated Afrikaner is much more culturally aware and active than we are. He has, although this should not be so, a more proprietary interest, for we tend to draw a complacent comfort from the achievements of the other English-speaking countries. In Natal the attendances at the theatre, at concerts, at the opera, at ballet, at art galleries and exhibitions are lower than in any other province. Now culture is seldom a viable business proposition, and the result of our apathy is a lowering, through financial necessity, of standards of presentation and a reluctance on the part of subsidising bodies, the Province and local authorities – to spend more for the few enlightened devotees.

Certainly, our theatre and opera, still in an emergent phase, fall short of international or absolute standards. They are also deficient in the long tradition and massive financial resources available to their European counterparts. They do, however, merit your attention and attendance, for only thus will they achieve greater maturity and finer quality. How often does one hear the comment *I saw it at La Scala – or Covent Garden – why should I go to the Alhambra?* No one reaches maturity without growing up – and it is during that period that we are most in need of encouragement and sympathetic attention.



Without in any way suggesting that you should lower your own personal critical standards, I do suggest that critical assessment, for public consumption, should be tempered to the level of cultural development and, of course, the material resources available. An assessment which ignores these factors does both performer and critic alike a disservice.

What I urge upon you is a continued and active involvement in the cultural life. If you are talented — use those talents to the full. If, like me, you have no talent, there is still an important place for you. A novel needs readers, a painting or sculpture beholders, the theatre an audience, and music listeners. So think, read, go to the theatre, to art galleries and exhibitions, to concerts. Only thus will you make use of those very faculties which your education should have rendered more keenly perceptive. And you will have encouraged your performers, your writers, your painters, your sculptors, and helped towards a fuller flowering of our local cultural life. The University has, both in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, done much, through theatre production, lunch-hour concerts, and the encouragement of the visual arts, to sharpen the artistic appetite. For this it is greatly to be commended, but you should not allow that appetite to be blunted by the passage of time and the pressures of a business or domestic life.

This continued involvement with creative art is only one aspect of the service which your privileged position obliges you to render to the community. You will also have a more highly developed social conscience which will, I trust, cause you to recognise and combat social injustice wherever you find it. We live in a country beset with problems, not the least of which is that the major part of the population is handicapped by lack of education, lack of earning skills, lack of opportunity and by the reluctance of the privileged to surrender any of the perquisites of their present position. If we do not recognise the frustrations of the underprivileged, we do not face the realities of our future — as we must do, frankly and courageously. I am no politician — I can offer you no solution. We all know that the problem exists and most of us bury our heads in the sand.

I have practised in the law and now help in its administration. A system of law is fundamentally a compromise — a convenient code designed to allow people to live together peacefully and comfortably. Any effective compromise involves sacrifice or the surrender of some right or privilege. In our courts, we try, within the framework of precedent and legislation, to reconcile as harmoniously as possible the conflicting interests of different persons, natural and juristic. Above all we try to recognise the essential dignity of each man. That we often fail is because the courts administer not absolute, but human justice. We have our frailties and errors of judgment, but we do the best we can. We do not make law. We administer the law as it is. There may be laws about which we have personal feelings, sometimes strong. Our task is to ensure that they operate as temperately as possible. In any case of ambiguity, the starting point in interpretation is in favour of the liberty of the individual.

I have defined my position as a judge briefly because to some extent, the courts are the external manifestation of the collective social conscience, and its practitioners — the attorneys and advocates — are the spokesmen for individual rights.

There is an almost unlimited field in which the social conscience operates. It operates in the political field — your elected representatives make the laws which we administer. It operates in the commercial field — one recalls the long and ultimately successful search by one man for a cheap nutritional substance to combat malnutrition. And it operates as strongly as anywhere in the field of social work — in the alleviation of suffering, hardship and of tension in the relationship of individuals with each other and with society as a whole. *Ex hypothesi*, those who have graduated in that field this evening, intend to make practical use of what they have learned. It is a field that requires rare qualities and I commend your dedication and congratulate you on your achievement.

I think it is appropriate to mention in this context the outstanding social contribution which NICRO (the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders) makes and will continue to make in the elimination of the frustrating social conditions which breed crime, and in

the assistance given to ex-prisoners in their re-integration into society.

I know that, in this address, I have covered ground which has, time and time again, been the subject of similar addresses, but I have done so because the fundamental message bears repetition. Simply stated it is: use your training — be intellectually alert — be concerned for other people — support the arts — and live life to the full!





**Address**  
**by**  
**Dr. R. E. VAN DER ROSS**

Vice-Chancellor and Rector  
University of the Western Cape

*delivered in Durban  
on 12 April 1975*

Address by

**Dr R.E. VAN DER ROSS**

You have done me and my university great honour by inviting me to address you on this occasion, and the fact that your Vice Chancellor recently honoured us by addressing our students on a similar occasion heightens our feeling of gratification that there should be these visible signs of friendly association between the two institutions.

This is, I believe, in itself a healthy state of affairs for the academic as well as for the social development of South Africa. For the academic, because the members of the academic community should liaise freely with one another if there is to be growth and vigour; for the social, because we are one society, and if we of the Cape sympathise with you of Natal and the other provinces in some respects because you are not Capetonians, we would also have you know that we seek bonds of communication with you in order that we may benefit from your undoubted store of advantages.

But there are other barriers in South Africa than those of provincialism, which we now regard rather light-heartedly since the secession of Natal has ceased to be a topic of serious discussion, and since telecommunications, the mass media and jet air travel have broadened our physical horizons. There are the barriers of historical descent, of language and of race or population group. There are barriers of political participation, of economic control, of class structure, of power and of religious affinity. And there are yet other barriers based on these but less easy to define, such as the attitudes and anxieties, the fears and frustrations, the preferences and prejudices of people.

This last-named class of psychological phenomena is very important. It is one of the fallacies of our times, a fallacy

often perpetuated in our universities, the citadels of reason, that the so-called emotional aspects of our lives are unimportant, even reprehensible. But emotions are real, and if human beings are essentially rational they are also vitally emotional. Some of our most important decisions are based on emotions, even if we go to great lengths to try and rationalise our actions. The professions we follow, the people we marry, the location of our homes, the religious and secular education of our children, the firms for which we work, the political parties for which we vote and the wars for which we sacrifice our lives, these are all important matters, and I believe that more often than we may wish to admit, emotions and sentiments play a bigger part in arriving at the relevant decisions than does cold, calculated reason.

My reason for mentioning this matter is that university students often, in their zeal to be rational, try to play down the non-rational aspects of life. But this leads to the danger that when they leave the university and enter the competitive world, and when they find that the world of affairs is not quite motivated as they would have it to be, they withdraw from active participation, write off their elders as socially or politically irretrievable and, using this as a rationalisation, get on with their own business, professional or private lives, leaving the world of public affairs to get on on its own. And whilst the cynic might hold that the world of public affairs derives great benefit from this withdrawal of youthful talent, it is also true, I believe, that youth has a positive contribution to make even in that sector, notwithstanding its lack of experience.

This is not the first occasion on which the University of Natal has honoured me by asking me to speak at one of its great occasions. It is, indeed, the second. The first was in 1960 when I spoke at the education conference held to commemorate your 50th anniversary. I then delivered a paper on a rather gloomy topic, whose gloom was matched by the ponderousness of its title. It was called: *Some of the psychological and philosophical consequences of the South African educational system*. As I remember it now rather dimly, it developed the theme that our school system was in some ways responsible for engendering in our youth attitudes and prejudices which, if they did not give rise to, at least



supported the idea of a race-discriminatory society. Now, after fifteen further years of experience and labour in just such a society, during which I have become head of a university, itself in part the outcome of race-discriminatory theories, I return to speak at the University of Natal.

But I am happy in the thought that there seems to be a new spirit abroad, a more optimistic spirit. If in 1960 we in the Cape at least, and we of the Coloured community saw South African society as being swept out into the sea of racialism on a backwash of fear, we see it today more as a society manfully striving back to the shore, drawing hope and strength as each effort brings some success, believing that soon it might feel the solid earth under its feet again and that it might return to the safety of the land and the companionship of others.

Of course, we could be wrong in this assessment. Tiny gains now made might be undone by stronger counter-currents. But I make these observations because I wish to remind you, as students who were only entering school when that 1960 address was given, that life does not flow on in a straight line either of advance or retrogression. There is constant ebb and flow, and it is the business of each generation, of each batch of qualifying students, to do its bit to consolidate the gains made and to seek to make new improvements. For the years since 1960 were not idle years. They were marked by hectic struggle and assertion, a process in which I am pleased to acknowledge the part played by the people of Natal.

It is against the background of these remarks that I wish to frame some comments directed mainly at you, the new graduates in Engineering, Medicine, Science and Social Science, today. I remember the occasion, some years ago, when that great comedian, Bob Hope, spoke at a ceremony similar to this at a university in Washington, D.C. He posed the urgent question: *What advice to give to some hundreds of young people ready to go out into the big, wide world?* And he answered it by saying: *My advice to you is : don't go!*

Humour is a great agent for relieving tensions, and its value resides largely therein that despite its apparent absurdity it also includes some profound truth. I would like to suggest



that Bob Hope's injunction not to go into the world derives some of its hold on the imagination in that there is some sense in which you should not go. You should not go if going entails leaving behind the idealism of youth so abundantly found in the university. You should not go in the sense that you cut yourself adrift from studies and the pursuit of truth. You should not go if you go to join the ranks of those who, for reasons of their own, discredit the academic world as unrealistic near-idiot's so that they may throw all morality by the board.

But we all know that you will go, and so it is well that we pause awhile and ask what, then, should be the guiding principles of those who today receive the accolade of academic success, the handclasp of proud parenthood and society's assurance of basic employability?

There will be many such guiding principles enunciated, each reflecting its own area of interest, its own standards and its own perception of mankind as seen from its own vantagepoint. Those of you who graduate in medicine have already taken the Hippocratic Oath, an act pregnant with the wisdom and dedication of many centuries of endeavour in the healing arts. Whilst I am not aware of any similar overt and single act on the part of engineers, normative scientists or social scientists, I believe it would nevertheless be fair to say that you who have qualified in these areas of human endeavour have also been brought, pertinently and consistently, to realise the ethical aspects of your disciplines.

It is a happy choice of words when academics speak of these areas of study as *disciplines*. For it means, in fine, that you who move in those areas cannot do as you please. You are bound, regulated, disciplined, by the subject-matter of your study, by the laws of nature, by the essentials of truth, and this is an ethical or moral matter. The engineer who constructs a bridge is no less bound by considerations of human safety and welfare than is the doctor who prescribes a drug; the scientist who studies molecular structure will find that ultimately his work affects the happiness of people no less than the seemingly more direct human involvement of the social worker. And in each case there is the discipline; the discipline which starts as a set of rules and of laws prescribed

by materials, by nature, by text-books or by professional bodies, but which in time and by assiduous and dedicated practice becomes self-imposed.

And it is at that point that you, today's graduands, will discover the meaning and responsibility of your profession. For at that point, where decisions have to be made and where the fate of others is involved, you stand at the meetingpoint of the past, with all that medicine or science has accumulated, and the future as it is to be embodied in a particular person or persons, your patient or client, or the public who will use the facilities provided by you, even if they never meet you in person.

It has become popular, of recent years, to speak of *inter-disciplinary* studies at universities and even at high schools. This concept attempts to meet the demand for integrating our knowledge, providing a broader outlook and making us all more aware of the need to round out our personalities. Partly, this is the result of the technological age and of the specialised times in which we live, where the machine has become so powerful that we humans are frightened, and are again seeking one another out so that we may re-discover our own sources of strength and re-establish confidence by contact.

The Robbins Commission on Higher Education in Great Britain, which reported in 1963, enunciated this clearly when it spoke of the aims of higher education and said:

*The aim should be to produce not mere specialists but rather cultivated men and women. And it is the distinguishing characteristic of a healthy higher education that, even when it is concerned with practical techniques, it imparts them on a plane of generality that makes possible their application to many problems – to find the one in the many, the general characteristic in the collection of particulars. It is this that the world of affairs demands of the world of learning. And it is this, and not conformity with traditional categories, that furnishes the criterion of what institutions of higher education may properly teach.*



Whilst few academics and few people of sound common sense — if, indeed, there is a difference, would quarrel with these thoughts, I wish to carry the theme a stage further. It is all very well to inject into the medical course a measure of psychology, or similarly to transfuse some hospital experience into social science, and it is certainly commendable that students in engineering or science should include one or two courses in the humanities. But even if the university has achieved this for you, it still remains to be asked whether you will, in your life in the world of affairs after leaving university, give evidence of being what Robbins called *cultivated men and women*, and if so, how? And it is to this topic that I would now like to address myself briefly.

It is one of the realities of South African society that it has become divided into a large number of sections, of which the racial divisions are the most obvious. I say it is a reality, and I specifically avoid calling it a tragedy, as some are fond of doing. I call it a reality because it is the result of historical development. The various Europeans, the African and Malay slaves, the Indian plantation workers and the Chinese miners who came to this country, together with the indigenous Africans, Hottentots and Bushmen, produced a totality of such varying cultural elements that it has taken some three hundred years before sufficient development and confidence, together with needs from outside pressures, could engender a purposeful seeking out of similarities rather than an accentuation of differences and antagonisms.

You, the new graduates of Natal University, along with others, enter into this present process, where I submit that your attention should not be turned to the past in order to justify differences, but where you should be forward-looking, convinced that your own actions and attitudes will contribute to the principles and practices of the society in which you and your children will live.

I wish to suggest that you will be able to make a contribution by giving attention to the position of that section of society called the lower working class, those born in poverty and for whom life holds out so little of the good things which others take for granted. Whatever your line of work, you will meet these people, but you have to become sensitive to their

existence, else you will not notice them. It may be the boy or the man who sells you a newspaper, the patient whom you treated and forgot after he had left, the labourer in the factory who does the heavy work for you, or the client whose case-history you wrote up and tucked away in the relevant file.

What future does South African society — our society — hold for these people? Are we discharging our function as cultivated men and women if we simply accept that there are others in poverty and blame it on them, on their alleged thriftlessness, laziness, drunkenness or lack of ambition? Do you, today's graduate in medicine or science really work harder than the unskilled labourer? If you were to ask to what degree the differences between yourselves and the lower working class are due to your own fine qualities, and to what extent the accident of birth is responsible, are you sure that you have so much right to live so much better than they?

But this is not said merely to make you feel guilty or uncomfortable; indeed it might be argued that you are as little to blame for the accident of your birth as they are for theirs. But now that society has placed you in your present stratum . . . now that time and hard work within the framework of values of the middle class have brought you where they have . . . now that you have been made aware of the interdependence of all people in our society — now you *do* have the responsibility of answering very firmly and positively that you *are* your brother's keeper.

You will note that I make my appeal for humanistic involvement with humans on the grounds of class rather than of race. As a result of the tremendous forces of capital and power engendered by industrialism, the barriers of class have become so powerful that those unfortunate enough to be in the lower classes cannot be lifted out by sweet sentiment, paternalistic charity or stern admonition. It is essential that there be changes in the distribution of wealth and of power, it is imperative that the basic decencies of proper housing, education and health services be brought within the reach of all, and it is vital that the phrase *equality of opportunity* be freed of the fraudulence which it now derives from the handicaps placed on the poor. And if these changes are to come, it is also necessary that they be embodied in law, and this is where



you, too, as members of the public, as potential framers of policy and as voters, can extend your influence beyond the bounds of your respective professions and ensure that society fulfils its obligations to all.

These are high ideals, and no university can teach you how to put them into practice, indeed it is not the function of the university to go beyond giving you the general basis for decision-making, granting you mastery of a skill and the ability to earn a secure living, and leaving you to make the day-to-day decisions as they arise. This has been done for you, and I congratulate you on having attained this status. May you now go on to take your place in the world of affairs, may your work be blessed, and may you grow to find happiness in the joy which you bring to others and the lustre which you add to your University.



**J. C. BON SMA**  
**Doctor of Science**  
**Honoris Causa**

**CITATION**

delivered by the University Orator  
Professor J.V.O. Reid

in Pietermaritzburg  
on 10 May 1975



## J. BONSMMA:

Jan C. Bonsma was born, in 1909, under the sign of Aries and grew up in Heidelberg, the son of the Vice-Principal of the Teachers Training College, the source of Professor Bonsma's lifelong enthusiasm for teaching. He graduated in Animal Science at the University of Pretoria in 1931, and then taught at school for three years. In 1935 he went back to academics, obtained his Masters degree in agriculture and proceeded to study cattle genetics in the USA, home of that wellknown poem:

*I've never seen a purple cow,  
I never hope to see one,  
But I can tell you anyhow,  
I'd rather see than be one.*

For 23 years after his return Bonsma was in charge of the Mara and Messina livestock research programmes where the ecological and climatological research work on cattle originated and developed, and at Mara the work was done which established the Bonsma breed of cattle. He was part-time senior lecturer in Animal Science at the University of Pretoria from 1940 until 1955, and thereafter until he retired from the post last year, head of the department. During that time he produced more than 150 scientific and popular scientific publications, 35 chapters in handbooks and conference proceedings, many bulletins, to be sure, and a book.

He has received many awards and medals, both South African and American, North and South. Eight of his students went on to chairs in South Africa and overseas, more than 30 received masters degrees, 14 received doctorates. As to travelling he must be the archetype of that modern phenomenon, the travelling professor, since his professional visits

to foreign countries are uncountable, from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska, from Cape Town to Iceland, as delegate, invited speaker, guest professor.

But it is the significance of his scientific work, not the frills of his life, that are the claim on this University for an honorary degree. Bonsma showed the mechanism of degeneration of *Bos Taurus* cattle when imported from Europe to subtropical countries — a temperature effect on appetite and metabolism. He elucidated the determinants of the cattle breeding season, most importantly the effect of photoperiodicity, and introduced new breeding practices which greatly increased productivity. This understanding enabled him to solve the problems of miniature calves born in the subtropics, and of miniature lambs in Queensland. He discovered an effective test which enabled him to predict which newborn calves would adapt well to subtropical climates, so greatly advancing the breeding of suitable strains. He analysed the differences between *Bos Indicus* and *Bos Taurus*, and why their adaptation to heat should be different. He established the principles by which cattle could be bred for resistance to ticks and flies, and to have immunity to endemic diseases of subtropical cattle. Long before ecology became a popular word, he was discovering the principles of the science as it is applied to cattle. The practical effect of all this was to change the livestock potential and the whole animal husbandry policy of the ranching areas of Southern Africa and of similar countries. The Bonsma breed of cattle is a living tribute to his work. Single-handed he created a bull market.

Jan Bonsma has been instrumental too in introducing new ideas into livestock judging and particularly the idea of judging for functional efficiency of animals and not on the basis of arbitrary and empirical standards. He reads animals like a book. A single diagnostic glance is usually sufficient for him to know their ancestry, personal history, present condition and probable future, and it makes no difference whether he is contemplating a cow or appraising a pigeon.

His students knew Bonsma as a hard taskmaster and disciplinarian who would accept nothing less than their best effort. At the same time, by example and encouragement, he kindled in them the same fiery enthusiasm and dedication

which mark his own career. They came to know that under his outer shell he had a great understanding of human failings and a fatherly interest in all their affairs.

He is a man of forceful character, whom many an academic china shop has admitted with trepidation. Careful in forming his opinions, once he decided upon a course of action this would be pursued with relentless vigour. Adversity and initial lack of success served only to stimulate greater effort and this tenacity – which he likes to refer to as *playing* – carried him to his greatest triumphs. He is not easily cowed. His sharp and analytical mind, quick wit, debating expertise and eloquence in stating his case have converted many to his way of thinking, to the benefit of animal production as a whole. It is no wonder that a film has been made about his life and career.

Jan Bonsma showed how the European bull could be brought to this country, and it is fitting, Mr Chancellor Sir, that today we are under the sign of Taurus, whom the Greeks placed in the heavens in gratitude for bringing Europa across the seas. That constellation will glitter in the skies in the dark photoperiods to come, each point of light one that he has shed on his subject. Under that sign his horoscope reads:

*Your friends rejoice with you at work well done.  
It is time to receive their praise and honours. New  
clothes are coming your way which though they  
may seem somewhat colourful are entirely appropriate.  
Do not hesitate but step boldly forward  
and receive your due.*



**E. CREE**  
**Doctor of Music**  
**Honoris Causa**

**CITATION**

delivered by the University Orator  
Professor J.V.O. Reid

in Durban  
on 11 April 1975

## E. CREE

On the first occasion that this University grants a degree by examination in music, it celebrates its new department by singing the praises of Edgar Cree, whom I have the honour to present for the degree of Doctor of Music, *honoris causa*. For a year therefore the department will have the unique privilege of being able to claim that 50 percent of its graduates are world-renowned celebrities at the very forefront of music.

Edgar Cree was born in Yorkshire in the year the first world war was declared, and was sent to school at Oundle from where it is said, he ran away. His musical education was at King's College, Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar until an unfortunate mishap involving a fire in the Master's hedge, and later at the Royal College of Music, where his teachers included such famous men as Vaughan Williams and Constant Lambert. A composition of his was performed at a Promenade Concert by Sir Henry Wood while he was still a student. He spent two years as assistant organist of Peterborough Cathedral, and five as Organist and Master of Choristers at Christ Church, Purley, becoming then junior conductor at the BBC.

The even tenor of his life was soon interrupted by the outbreak of the second world war and without a quaver Cree joined the RAF. His career was put aside for a long period, to the tune indeed of six years. The solos of Flight Lieutenant Edgar Cree were now rather different, the score that concerned him held no music, and a bar was a place for a double Bass.

His Coastal Command performance over, Cree came to South Africa to take up the post which he relinquished only last year, that of conductor of the SABC Symphony Orchestra,

and it is in these 28 years that he has made his name known throughout South Africa and the wider musical world. At home he has brought symphonic music to a whole generation of people; there must be very few who have not at least had the opportunity of hearing his concerts, and few of those who have who do not associate great music on the radio or in the concert hall with his name. He has conducted orchestras in Britain, Europe and Israel, and at home accompanied many visiting soloists, so that his name has spread abroad.

Edgar Cree is above all an all-round conductor, with an exceedingly wide repertoire and an ability to bring to life an orchestra playing anything written for the symphony orchestra from the earliest to the most modern. With a memory that deserves the cliché of being called photographic, he conducts without a score a range of music that is an example to visiting conductors. Many associate him with an emphasis on contemporary music, and indeed he has conducted many first performances; South African composers have much to thank him for. But if that is taken to mean that it is at the expense of earlier music, it would be quite wrong. His style reminds one of Malcolm Sergeant, who had also been at Peterborough Cathedral, and in fact they were friends for many years, alike in their colourfulness and flamboyance, their bubbling vitality. Those who play under his baton know his ruthless frankness and his immovable insistence on perfection in playing, and at the same time his great humility and humanity. He achieves a sensitive rapport with both players and audience which makes his concerts something much more than a playing of concert pieces, as through a record player. He is noted for his conducting of ballet; and he has been instrumental in advancing that art in South Africa. His brilliance as an accompanist is such that a visiting pianist took the unprecedented step of publicly congratulating him after a performance for which Cree was asked to take the baton at the last moment, the performance being of a work of notable difficulty.

The man that underlies the music is a piece with it. He conducts his life *con brio* and with deep concern about its purpose; a great raconteur and entertaining speaker with a gift for the felicitous phrase and the well chosen word, as well known to radio listeners as to players, he is at the same time a collector of old books, a student of Eastern philosophy, a



believer in meditation and mysticism, which is perhaps the key to his great power over orchestras, for perceiving his self-discipline, they discipline themselves the more.

Mr Chancellor, Sir, the degree of Doctor of Music is not easily come by. When Handel was offered an honorary degree by Oxford University, he found it would cost him £100; so he gave a flat refusal. But he was known to be sharp at business; and so he moved his company from hostile London to friendly Oxford. There, after sitting through the lengthy degree ceremony, he instead took £4000 profit from admission fees to his performances. Things are different now, for our honorary graduand has had to make no journey; he is already among friends, because Edgar Cree's last movement was to Durban and the Durban Symphony Orchestra, a movement in which the sea is a major key for he is in addition a lover of yachts and a serious sailor. We are delighted in this University and city to have a man who combines in one person with such virtuosity this double interest in music and sailing. If therefore the citizens of Durban should detect strains of Handel's water music, or a barcarole on the waters of Durban bay, they will know that a single master is responsible, whom we now trick out, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the performance and appreciation of music, with the robes of a Doctor of Music.









