UNIVERSITY OF NATAL

Laudation

spoken by the University Orator

Professor J. W. HORTON, B.A.(Rhodes), M.Litt.(Oxon.)

in presenting

HANNO RUND

to the Chancellor at the Graduation Ceremony

held in Durban

on the 30th April, 1982

Mr Chancellor,

For a non-numerate like myself to speak in the presence of any mathematician is a somewhat uncomfortable experience. To speak in the presence of one such as Hanno Rund, whom even other mathematicians hold in awe, is positively frightening. I am comforted however, by two considerations: the first is that mathematicians have, in general, learnt to be tolerant of the stumblings of their non-numerate brethren; the second comes from the words of Francis Bacon: According to him, the Mathematics makes men subtle; while Histories make men wise. But then I suspect that Bacon, too, was non-numerate. For no-one can doubt the wisdom as well as the subtle brilliance of our Honorary Graduand.

It was our supreme fortune that Hanno Rund held the Chair of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics here for some six years. We could not hold him, but our sense of loss has surely to an extent been mitigated by the legacy he has left us. It was here that he began to direct the study of mathematics throughout South Africa towards new peaks. It is said that within ten years there was a Rund Ph.D. on virtually every campus in the country. Through his own publications, through

the researches of his post-graduate students, and through the founding and development of the South African Mathematical Society, there soon emerged what can be called the Rund School. Though in person he has been away from us for so many years, his inspiration and his influence are with us yet. It has been said by J.E. Littlewood that "Mathematics is very hard work, and Mathematicians tend to be above average in health and vigour". Hanno Rund's career is surely proof of this. He himself has said "one does not play at Mathematics whenever the fancy strikes one. One works at it, and works all the time". And so he has done. When he was writing his first book at this University, he would come into his office at four in the morning. Nor did he look kindly on any of his colleagues or students who showed understandable hesitation in following his example. As a supervisor he was renowned for the supremely high standards he set and required; but he was also the most painstaking and constructive, the most helpful of guides. And the brilliance and clarity of his formal teaching is remembered by his first year students no less than by his post-graduates.

Hanno Rund exemplified the Mathematician's health and vigour as well. Always a keen mountaineer, he once walked, on his own along the mountain tops, from Golden Gate to Mont-Aux-Sources - a feat in perfect keeping with the standards he set for himself and for others. Since he left us, his career has been a predictable extension of what he gave to us here - in

the Transvaal, then back to Canada, and finally to the Headship of the sixth largest Mathematics Department in the United States, at the University of Arizona. And he has never ceased to publish, so that, at the last count, more than a hundred seminal works appear over his name. He is the exemplar of that truth recently enunciated by the present holder of the Chair - that there is no fundamental distinction between pure and applied Mathematics - there is only Mathematics. In the service of that discipline he has of course contributed to the development of many fields; but his fundamental work on Differential Geometry, Calculus of Variations and Theoretical Physics stand like mighty monuments on the road to greater understanding.

He has never lost contact with this Country, and the Mathematicians he has schooled. It is therefore with great pleasure and pride that we welcome him home to-night, and seek to honour him on that campus where he achieved his first Chair. Mr Chancellor, I have therefore the honour to request you to confer the degree of Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, on Hanno Rund.

GRM 2/2/15

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