

## HONORARY GRADUATE

### Dennis Arthur Etheredge

Dennis Arthur Etheredge was born in Durban on 18 May 1921. He attended Durban High School, renowned for producing men who become leaders in all facets of life in this country. After matriculating, Dennis Etheredge read for the degree of Bachelor of Arts at this university, followed by an honours degree in History and a teacher's diploma. His studies were interrupted by war service in the South African Air Force from 1942 to 1946. Serving in the Middle East and Italy, he rose to the rank of captain. Later he assisted in the preparation of a section of the official history of South Africa's role in the world conflict.

On demobilization Etheredge accepted a post as a teacher at Jeppe Boys' High School, where he rose to the position of senior history master in his late twenties. During this period he obtained the degree of Master of Arts at this university. The title of his dissertation was 'The Early History of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines'. It sounds innocuous enough, but the dissertation had to remain under lock and key for twenty years.

Then Etheredge took sabbatical leave from his teaching post in order to study full time for his doctorate at the University. His money running out, he accepted an eight-week temporary post with the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Ltd. This intended brief interlude turned out to be unfortunate for the University and Jeppe Boys' High School, but fortunate for the Anglo American Corporation. For the temporary appointment was extended, and led to a permanent appointment in May 1951.

Soon Dennis Etheredge became personal assistant to Hermie Koch, then manager of Anglo American's Gold Division. By 1955 he had risen to the rank of assistant manager. Then he was transferred to a team under Sir Keith Acutt in Salisbury that had been formed to develop the corporation's operations in the new Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Mr Etheredge's interests shifted towards personnel matters and in 1962 he was appointed a personnel consultant; it was a time when personnel affairs were crucial to the development of the Federation and its black neighbours.

In 1963 Mr Etheredge moved to the corporation's newly opened office in Lusaka as Northern Rhodesia prepared to become independent Zambia. His personal qualities of persistence and patent honesty assisted greatly in the successful transition to Zambianization of that country.

When his stint of service in Zambia came to a close, Dennis Etheredge returned to Johannesburg as deputy to John Shilling, Chairman of the Gold Division of the corporation. Deserved promotion to the rank of manager came in 1969. In 1974 he succeeded Shilling as Chairman of Anglo American's Gold and Uranium Division. In this aspect of Anglo American's activities he played a major role for many years.

But it was not only on the business side that Dennis Etheredge did so much; for he is deeply concerned with the welfare of individuals. His experience and his success in negotiations with black Africans in Zimbabwe and Zambia bore fruit in South Africa, contributing to the major improvements in the conditions of employment.

Arising from his senior position in the Anglo American Corporation, Mr Etheredge occupied a number of important posts. In the period 1979 to 1980 he was President of the Chamber of Mines of South Africa and a member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council. From 1978 until his retirement in December 1983 he was Chairman of the Nuclear Fuels Corporation. Mention should also be made of his membership of the Board of the Atomic Energy Corporation and the Board of the Council for Mineral Technology; his occupancy of the post of Director of the Uranium Enrichment Corporation; and his service as Trustee and Director of the Manpower and Management Foundation of Southern Africa.

At the end of 1983 Mr Etheredge retired from the posts of Executive Director of the Anglo American Corporation and Chairman of its Gold and Uranium Division, which has an annual turnover in excess of four billion rands. The prosperity of this country and its major mining houses are synonymous, and there is no doubt about the pre-eminent position of the Anglo American Corporation in the development of South Africa's natural resources.

Retirement for Dennis Etheredge is a misnomer for one possessing his tremendous drive and energy. He was actively engaged as Trustee and Director of the Manpower and Management Foundation until its recent dissolution. He is Chairman of the Mining Industry Pensions Funds and a director of a number of leading companies.

Mr Etheredge has never restricted his energies to the business world, and the suppressed teacher in him has sought expression in a variety of outside activities. While he was in Rhodesia he was responsible for the establishment of the Council for Social Services, the Outward Bound Association and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. In 1963, when the Federation was approaching its demise, Mr Etheredge received an OBE for these services.

When Mr Etheredge moved to Anglo American's Lusaka office his activities covered more than the mining industry. In addition to serving on the government's Zambianization Committee, on the commission which helped establish salary levels for civil servants, he was also a member of the University of Zambia's Council for four years.

Since returning to South Africa, Mr Etheredge's energies have continued to be shared by his outside interests. Currently he is President of the Bureau of Literacy and Literature, of Toc H (Southern Africa), of the South African Institute of Management, and of the Johannesburg Child Welfare Association.

He has been President of SABRITA (the acronym of the South Africa Britain Trade Association).

This university is deeply indebted to Mr Etheredge for his service to it. He returned to South Africa in 1971 at the time the University had agreed to take over the Hillbrow Institute of Adult Studies. The Institute was renamed the Institute for Adult Education and External Studies, and Mr Etheredge was appointed by Council as a member of its Board of Control. It was the University's good fortune to acquire Mr Etheredge's services at a time when the Institute required the influence of a visionary. In 1976 the Institute was renamed the Centre for Continuing Education, and two years later Mr Etheredge was appointed Chairman of its Board of Control. This was an unorthodox, yet imaginative, appointment; the chairmanship of a body of this type is normally reserved for a member of the university's Council.

Under Dennis Etheredge's inspiring leadership and infectious enthusiasm the Centre has expanded enormously and into diverse fields of adult and continuing education for the betterment of all groups of South African society. Its budget in 1972 was R28 215; its budget in 1984 was well over a million rands. Truly it is an endeavour of which Wits can justly be proud.

How fitting it is that this university show its deep appreciation, through the bestowal on Dennis Etheredge of its degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, of the magnificent work of a man who has done so much for so many; a man to whom so aptly apply Walt Whitman's lines:

'Behold, I do not give lectures or a little charity,  
'When I give I give myself.'