



Mr Justice J. A. van Heerden

## *Auret van Heerden (1918–1997)*

We have gathered here to pay tribute to the memory of our late colleague, Auret van Heerden, who died at his home in George in the Cape a month ago.

Auret van Heerden was born in 1918. His father was an attorney in Bredasdorp in the Cape Province and he matriculated there in due season. In 1936 he joined the Department of Justice and worked firstly in the magistrate's court and thereafter for approximately nine years in the Master's Office in Cape Town. During that period he studied part-time and attained his LL.B. degree from the University of South Africa. Then he left the service and took up articles with a Cape Town firm of attorneys. After completing his articles he rejoined the civil service as a prosecutor in the Department of Justice, first in the magistrate's court and then on the staff of the Attorney-General of the Transvaal.

In 1955 he resigned from the civil service and commenced practising as an advocate at the Bar in Pietermaritzburg. He took silk in 1965 and was appointed to the Natal Bench in January 1967. When he retired in August 1988 he was the Judge President of Natal, having been so appointed shortly before his retirement. After his retirement he continued to serve, for he acted as a judge in Cape Town, Kimberley and in the Eastern Cape.

It is of interest to note that Auret's brother, Nils, was appointed to the Cape Bench some two years before Auret was appointed in Natal. They also shared an interest and ability in rugby. Auret played for the Gardens club in Cape Town as a flank forward and was a serious contender for inclusion in the Western Province rugby team. Nils played for Western Province as a fullback and was at one stage on the verge of selection for the Springbok team. Auret was a keen golfer, and member of, and regular player at, the Maritzburg Golf Club.

He was active in the cultural life of the Afrikaans-speaking people of Pietermaritzburg and Natal. He was a life member of the Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings. He was a member for many years of the Afrikaanse Kultuurraad and the Rapportryerskorps of Pietermaritzburg. He was also a member

of the board of the Voortrekker Museum. He was active in the Dutch Reformed Church, not only as an elder for many years, but also as a member of the legal committee of the Natal Synod and its standing council until his elevation to the Bench. He also served for many years as a member of the Council of the University of Natal.

He was a man of integrity and a hardworking and conscientious judge, who made a meaningful contribution to the administration of justice in this province. We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow, Ann, his son Auret, who has followed in his father's footsteps by practising at the Bar in Pietermaritzburg, and his two stepdaughters June and Christine.

*(This tribute was paid by the Judge President of Natal, Mr Justice J.A. Howard, in 'A' Court, Pietermaritzburg.)*