

## *Tony Barrett (1925–2002)*

The death occurred at the beginning of August of Anthony (Tony) Barrett (77), well-known educationist and former Professor of Education at the University of Natal.

Barrett was born in Dundee, the son of an inspector of mines. He was educated at Merchiston and Michaelhouse and during the war served in the South African Navy as an officer aboard a minesweeper.

Returning to civilian life, he studied at the University of Natal, obtaining his BA in 1947 (with distinction in History) and winning the prestigious Elsie Ballot Scholarship to Cambridge. Here he gained his BA (Hons) in 1950, a degree converted to MA (Cantab) in 1954.

Back in Pietermaritzburg, he took up a post at Maritzburg College where he remained for 10 years, teaching English, History and Latin.

In 1962 he was appointed senior lecturer in the Department of Education at the University of Natal, where he was to remain until his retirement in 1990, becoming successively associate professor (1971), professor (1972) and head of department (1983). He served as dean of education from 1974 to 78 and again from 1980 to 82.

Barrett wrote a thesis in 1969 on the history of Michaelhouse which was subsequently published as *Michaelhouse: 1896–1968*. It was an endeavour which involved a great deal of primary research because at that time the school had no archives from which he could work.

At the time of his death, Barrett was a member of the board of governors of St Nicholas School and the council of the Natal Society Library, on which he had served for some 20 years. He was also a governor of St John's DSG for 25 years and, during



*Tony Barrett*

*(Photograph: Natal Society Collection)*

his term at the university, a member of the Joint Matriculation Board.

Professor Emeritus Robert Muir, for nearly 20 years a colleague of Barrett's in the faculty of education at the university, said of him: 'He was democratic and encouraged all staff to engage in decision-making, as well as giving them individually a great deal of control over their professional lives. He was also wise in his counsel and a powerful advocate for education in the decision-making bodies of the University.'

Barrett was a staunch member of the Anglican church, for many years in the Parish of St David's in Prestbury. He leaves his wife Gwen, three children and one grandchild.

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