

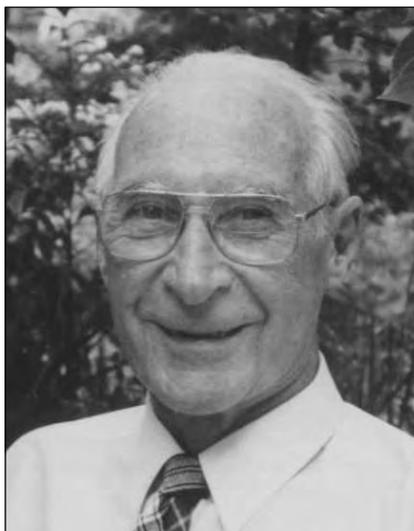
Obituaries

Raymond Gershom Gilkes Aitchison (1916–2012)

THE death of Ray Aitchison on Boxing Day at the age of 96 severed the last link with a pre-war generation of Maritzburg College Old Boys who went into teaching, all of whom made significant contributions to education. He was a member of the class of 1932 which, when in the third form, had had Alan Paton as their form-master. He showed his prowess at languages in winning the provincial prize for the best Matric English essay.

Although he was actually born in Durban of Scottish Congregational missionary stock, his childhood home was in Harding. His father died when he was only five years old, and his mother subsequently married Frank Oram, who had come to South Africa as a Brethren missionary but who subsequently became the Harding town clerk. It was through him that Aitchison became a life-long member of the Brethren.

Ray gained his teaching qualification at the Natal University College and went on to gain a Mathematics honours



Ray Aitchison

degree from the University of London. He began his teaching career in 1936 at the then Malvern Secondary School. During World War 2 he joined the South African Signals Corps and it was while stationed at Cape Point that, while away the time, he began the study of

New Testament Greek which eventually led to the completion of a Unisa degree in Greek, Hebrew and Theology some 30 years later. After the war he went back to teaching maths at Glenwood High in Durban.

Various promotions in the fifties took him to being deputy principal of Glenwood and then, in 1964, headmaster of Stanger High School. In 1970 he was appointed Physical Science subject adviser in the NED head office, and in 1974, after a departmental reorganisation, he was retired early at the age of 58. This was not a signal to vegetate. He was immediately snapped up by the Technical College to lecture Mathematics and Applied Mathematics to T1, T2 and T3 classes, which he did for the next 10 years. He also lectured in Electronics and, much to the amusement of his family, Chemistry to hairdressing students.

In his seventies he held *locum tenens* posts at the Natal College of Education, where he was able to lecture to students in Mathematics, Science, Biblical Studies and Computers, and at Indumiso. Subsequently he was also asked by the University of Natal to design a course in basic Mathematics and Arithmetic for students taking an agricultural diploma, and lectured them until he was over 80 years old.

In the meanwhile he had become involved in lecturing Hebrew and Greek at the KZN Missionary and Bible College (attached to the Church of England in South Africa), which he continued to do until 2012 when he was 96 years old.

Aitchison, whose wife predeceased him in 1984, leaves four daughters and a son and 10 grandchildren.

JACK FROST

