

HONORARY GRADUATE

Aanon Michael Rosholt

Aanon Michael Rosholt was born in Johannesburg on 13 November 1920. When he was a child, his family moved to Beira, but he completed his school education at Michaelhouse in Natal in 1938. He then began serving articles with a firm of accountants.

In the Second World War Mike Rosholt served as a lieutenant in the South African Artillery. He was wounded and captured in action in Egypt. For three years he was a prisoner of war. This time was not wholly wasted as books on accountancy were acquired through the Red Cross and he was able to continue his studies under the tutelage of the late Geoff Chubb. After the war he joined the firm of auditors, Goldby, Panchaud and Webber. He obtained the CA(SA) with distinction, having achieved the highest marks in the country, and in due course became a senior partner in the firm.

In 1960 he was invited to become a non-executive director of Thos Barlow and Sons, a company whose major interest at the time was in earth-moving equipment. Three years later he was persuaded to join Barlows in a full-time capacity. In 1968 he was appointed Managing Director, in 1972 Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive of what by then had become Barlow Rand, and on the death of Mr Punch Barlow in 1979, he succeeded him as Chairman. As a result largely of Dr Rosholt's leadership, acumen and drive, Barlow Rand expanded prodigiously, becoming the largest industrial conglomerate in South Africa. The group turnover grew from R47 million in 1963, the year in which Dr Rosholt became an executive director, to R29 billion in 1990, his last year as Chairman.

In addition to his directorships of companies within the Barlow Rand group, he served on the boards of South African Breweries Ltd, South African Mutual Life Assurance Company, of ASA Limited, and several other leading companies. He was Deputy Chairman of the Standard Bank of South Africa and of the Standard Bank Investment Corporation. He was one of the *Sunday Times* Top Businessmen of the Year in 1977, the Harvard Business School Club of South Africa's 'Business Statesman of the Year' in 1984, and the recipient of the Wits Business School's Management Excellence Award in 1987.

In spite of his immensely active and successful career in business, Dr Rosholt devoted a considerable amount of his time to public affairs, especially education. He was a member of the Board of the Urban Foundation from its inception, becoming Chairman in 1991. He was Chairman of the Urban Foundation Educational Trust, the Joint Educational Trust, the ASA Education Trust, and the Barlow Rand Education Trust. Substantial donations from the Barlow Rand Education Trust led to the establishment of the Alexandra Community Education Centre, the M. L. Sultan Technikon and the Fundikhono Training Centre. The School of Mechanical Engineering at this university has enjoyed generous support from the Barlow Trust.

Dr Rosholt was Chairman of the African Children's Feeding Scheme and of the College of Medicine Foundation. He serves, or has served, as a trustee of the Independent Development Trust, the South African Foundation, the Cape Human Rights Law Trust and the Family Health Foundation. He is a governor and trustee of the University of the Witwatersrand Foundation, the international fundraising Chairman of the New Era Schools Trust, and a patron of the South African Association for Co-operative Education. The number of other educational or charitable organisations of which Dr Rosholt is or was a trustee is extensive.

Among his honours and awards are the honorary Fellowship of the College of Medicine of South Africa,

and honorary degrees from the Universities of Natal and Durban-Westville.

Dr Rosholt was elected Chancellor of the University in 1982, and re-elected unopposed in 1989. As Chancellor, Dr Rosholt has not been a mere figurehead. He has made a point of being kept informed about University affairs, and his wise counsel has been invaluable. On a number of occasions he has defended the University on academic freedom and other issues.

Dr Rosholt's lifelong dedication to the well-being of his country, his fellow citizens, the disadvantaged, 'the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind' has been an inspiration to all who have the welfare of mankind at heart.

In recognition of his distinguished career in commerce and public affairs and of his fourteen years of service as its Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that the University has the honour of conferring on Aanon Michael Rosholt its highest accolade, the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.