

University Gold Medal

BRUCE KEIR MURRAY

Bruce Keir Murray was born in Durban in 1939, received his secondary education at King Edward VII school in Johannesburg and spent his undergraduate years at Rhodes University where he majored in history and was awarded a sequence of distinctions and firsts. He left South Africa in 1961 to pursue post-graduate studies at the University of Kansas where he was awarded a Masters degree in 1964 and a PhD in 1967. While there he developed an abiding interest in American history, which he subsequently taught in South Africa with great distinction. Professor Murray spent brief periods teaching history at the Universities of Kansas and Arkansas in 1966 and 1967, consolidating his expertise in comparative race relations, before returning to a lectureship in history at Rhodes in 1967.

In January 1970 he was appointed Senior Lecturer in the History Department at Wits. He spent the rest of his teaching career at Wits, making a massive contribution to the professional functioning and international standing of the department in the subsequent 30 years. Professor Murray's leadership and administrative contribution to the department and to the then Faculty of Arts have been immense.

In the year he arrived at Wits, Professor Garson, then Head of Department was on sabbatical and Professor Murray took over the running of the department. During Professor Garson's two spells as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and during his sabbaticals Professor Murray also served as Acting Head of Department. He was appointed Head in 1987.

The History Department grew rapidly in the course of the 1980s, assuming a leading position among history departments in South African universities and acquiring a highly visible international profile. Much of this was due to Professor Murray's qualities of leadership and foresight and his unflagging dedication to the welfare of the department. During this period Professor Murray also took on numerous faculty and university responsibilities, including the chairmanship of the Faculty's Social Studies Committee (1979-1980; 1984-1986). He was also chairman of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee (1990-1992) and chairman of the Senate Library Committee (1985-1991).

Professor Murray was appointed *ad hominem* Professor in 1984 in recognition of his outstanding teaching, his administrative contribution to the University and his scholarship. His scholarly standing had previously been recognised (in 1974-1975) by the award by the University of the prestigious University Council Overseas Fellowship. His greatest scholarly achievements are his three books: *The People's Budget 1909 - 1910: Lloyd George & Liberal Politics* (Oxford University Press, 1986); *Wits: The Early Years: A History of the University of the Witwatersrand 1906 - 1939* (WUP 1992); and *Wits: the Open Years* (WUP 1997).

He has also written numerous articles for leading international journals in his field, including *The Historical Journal*.

Reviews of his books reveal the exceptionally high regard in which his scholarship is held, both within South Africa and outside. Reviews by prominent scholars of *The People's Budget* appeared in all the leading British intellectual and political journals including *The Economist*, *The Spectator*, *New Society*, *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, and most of the main discipline-specific journals. All concurred that this was the definitive work and standard text on the subject, with the *Journal of Modern History* going so far as to declare: "The received wisdom of history is thus turned on its head".

Professor Murray's stature as a major scholar of British history was underlined by his election as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. The two volumes of the history of Wits have been no less highly praised as exceptionally professional, objective and trenchant, yet at the same time clearly committed to and admiring of the institution. As one reviewer put it, 'patriotic but judiciously so'. This was no small task, and Wits has been fortunate to obtain the services of a scholar of such sensibility and professional dedication. Professor Murray continues in his retirement to conduct research for a third volume of the Wits history in his usual selfless manner. In his retirement he remains highly active in the wider scholarly sphere, publishing regularly in local and international journals on his great love, cricket, particularly apartheid in cricket.

His dedication to Wits cricket is well known. He was chairman of the club between 1983 and 1987; president between 1989 and 1996; and the support, inspiration and direction he gave the club played a major part in helping it to the extraordinary distinction of achieving the Transvaal 'double' in 1983-4. Professor Murray again served as Chairman of the club from 1997 to 2003. He is currently President.

His commitment, as Wits sports administrators attest, is second to none, and is responsible for the current status of the Wits Cricket Club as one of Wits's best clubs. In recognition of his services Professor Murray has recently been appointed to a 3-year term as honorary Vice President of Gauteng cricket.

Bruce Murray is eminently worthy of the award of a gold medal on the grounds of outstanding service over a long period and of achievements of exceptional merit and distinction. It is with great pride and pleasure that the University Council Gold Medal is presented to Bruce Keir Murray.