

## THE REVD DR DAVID HART

My Lady and Chancellor,

The Revd Dr David Hart was Chaplain at Bournemouth University between 1999 and 2007. His impact on the University was immense. Countless students and staff turned to him for support and counsel in times of difficulty or crisis. He built and fostered a sense of community on Campus and, as an African himself, he took a leading part in the internationalisation of the University.

David Hart was born in Durban, South Africa, but later moved to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he completed his schooling with A-Levels in Mathematics and sciences. After a year on a Science degree course at Rhodes University in Grahamstown he decided on a transfer to Theology. His father's response was 'I'd better get a drink!'. Nevertheless, Theology it was. After graduating David worked for two years as a pastoral assistant in Johannesburg, then trained for the Anglican priesthood. Following his ordination in 1982 at Johannesburg he served a curacy in the same city, under an incumbent who introduced him to the writings of Thomas Hardy (and thus established his first connection with Dorset). But David's horizons and accomplishments were already wide: he and Heather, who is here with him today, also became the Rhodesian Ballroom and Latin American Dancing Champions.

Advancement came quickly to David, who soon became Rector of Christ Church in the large cosmopolitan suburb of Crown Mines. Life here was exciting: for instance, he frequently had to rescue his Head Server Vivienne from street fights. In 1987 he completed a Masters in Theology and became Sub-Dean of the Cathedral of St Cyprian the Martyr at Kimberley. Then, in 1989, he moved to Berkeley, California with a Rotary International Scholarship and began work on a doctoral thesis under the supervision of a Jungian theologian.

Having completed his PhD David was invited by the Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Revd Desmond Tutu, to be chaplain at the University of Cape Town, and to serve on the Archbishop's Board of Ministry. In the same year he was nominated to serve on the national Joint Board of Theology. By this time he had also joined the African National Congress and was deeply involved in the anti-apartheid movement. Marching in the streets with Archbishop Desmond, he was drenched with purple dye sprayed from police troop carriers and was chased many times by police dogs.

In 1999 David came to the UK to seek new directions and challenges. His first interview was at Bournemouth where, he says, he only discovered after the event that he should have done, or at least appeared to have done, some research on the job and the University. No matter: he was the man for the job and started with only a rucksack, his interview suit, and an empty house. This experience enabled him to empathise very strongly with new students,

especially international students. He recognised their bewilderment on arrival, and knew what it was like to be a stranger in a strange land. Many students, and staff, turned to David for support, advice and guidance, not only in their early days at the University but in times of crisis or uncertainty. He made himself available to all, 24 hours a day.

David constantly sought to bring different faith communities together by creating a multi-faith Chaplaincy in which each had their own space and identity. He provided much of the inspiration and leadership which established Diversity Days, which brought colour, music and drama to the Campus. In these and other ways he enabled us to 'Celebrate Diversity', a phrase he coined to capture his wish that we should 'enjoy the best of our differences'. He was also happy to take part in the higher councils of the University; thus Senior Management Team events, and other such gatherings, benefitted much from his wisdom, insight and sensitivity, those qualities which he brought into his many individual contacts and conversations.

In these and many other ways David spoke to the University, but he also spoke for it. Through his many external activities he created links for the International Office and other parts of the institution. He was highly active at national level, as Moderator of the Churches Commission for International Students, an international commission of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; as a member of the National Executive for Higher Education Chaplains; as a member of the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Ministry; as Vice-Chair of the Guild of P