

Greetings from Jan (and Clarisse) Roos

We are here today to remember a son of Witbank and Pretoria. He has become a friend and a brother.

My connection with Derrick started in the early 1980's when we were both teaching Computer Science at Pretoria with Roelf van den Heever as head of the department. I was not really a computer scientist. I was an engineer and my passion was networking. Roelf was an allrounder – he was head of department, businessman, engineer as well as a computer scientist. Derrick Kourie is the real Academic Computer Scientist and since those early years he was involved in automata theory, etc. These were good days. I still remember our long discussions with cups of coffee in the tea room and solving all SA's problems.

Derrick's style does not show ambition. He rather makes his point through intelligence. He takes everything in his stride. He is successful without obvious effort – perhaps an authentic academic. He enjoyed the short cuts. In a way, he, as well as us, sometimes seems surprised with his success.

Famous letters were often written "from the dean to the pope" on important issues. They were never expressed in an aggressive manner but in a coherent and convincing style and left the reader with no option but agreeing. After such a letter he would smile and enjoy his successful feedback.

There is more to Derrick that meets the eye. Derrick does not look like an athlete, but he

won the 880 yard race at school. He is not the most attractive guy around but he has a beautiful wife. He has challenging children and remains a loving and dedicated father. He does not have grand cars but he has many cars. He is fun and easy to get along with and his ability to provoke and enrich conversations is amazing.

His traits that stand out are kindness, friendliness, humbleness, patience fruits of the Spirit. I celebrate him as a blessed man: a real God lover.

[via EMail: 09 June 2008]