

A Tribute to Dr Rodney Maud
by Jan Meyer



1936-2017

The late Dr Rodney Maud enjoyed a very lustrous career that was strongly linked to sugarcane development throughout Africa. He graduated from the University of Natal with an Honours in Geology and started his career as a Soil Scientist in the late fifties at the South African Sugarcane Research Institute (SASRI). Rodney initially assisted Dr Beater with mapping the soils from over 500 000 ha of sugarcane land in South Africa, on a 1:6000 scale, using the parent material system of classification.

While at SASRI he was also involved in a number of research projects that included studying the impact of soil compaction and salinity/sodicity on cane growth. He co-authored two papers that were presented at the 1962 ISSCT congress held in Mauritius. The one paper dealt with the impact of a trash blanket on soil temperature and the other dealing with available soil phosphate and yield response of sugarcane to P fertilizer.

Rodney left SASRI in 1966 and spent a year studying the Geomorphology of Australia and on his return completed his PhD that dealt with unravelling the highly fractured, geological landscape of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). He played a big role in clarifying the relationship between geology and the nature of soils, as well as contributing a number of papers in the Volcanology and Paleo Climatology fields.

In 1976, Rodney together with John Drennen, a civil engineer, started their own geotechnical engineering consultancy, called Drennan Maud and Associates. Amongst the 8000 projects that Rodney was involved with, it goes without saying that his pioneering exploratory soil surveys to find suitable sites for new sugarcane estates in Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia, on behalf of the late Rene Leclezio from Lonrho Sugar, must rank as having the biggest impact in transforming the economic fortune of these

countries.

Rodney is a past member of South African Sugar Technologists' Association (SASTA), South African Quaternary Association (SASQUA), Southern African Soil Science Society and Geological Society of South Africa. For a number of years Rodney also held the position of an Honorary Professor in the Geology Department at the University of KZN, giving lectures in Geotechnical Engineering as well as supervising many a post graduate student.

Rodney will always be remembered for his passion to impart knowledge, his enthusiastic mentorship of younger scientists and his wonderful and witty off the cuff speeches that have entertained many an audience. Our sincere condolences go to Cilla his wife, his two daughters, other family members and loved ones.