

HONORARY GRADUATE

Hilda Joyce Segerman

Hilda Joyce Segerman (known to her many friends as Joyce) qualified for the degree of Bachelor of Science at this university in 1947. Her major subjects were Botany and Zoology. She was employed by the South African Institute for Medical Research in the Department of Serology from 1948 to 1952, when she resigned in order to raise her family.

She returned to the SAIMR in 1962, this time to the Department of Medical Entomology, where she has been ever since. She first worked under the tutelage of Professor Fritz Zumpt, then head of the department. Four years after she started in the department, Volume 3 of the *Arthropod Parasites of Vertebrates in Africa South of the Sahara* by Haeselbarth, Segerman and Zumpt was published.

Mrs Segerman's next major contribution to the literature on the medically important arthropod fauna of the African region was a chapter on Siphonaptera (fleas) in *Insects of Southern Africa* published in 1985. Her current major work is a revision of her writings on the fleas of southern Africa. This task she took on after her formal retirement from the SAIMR in 1991, the retirement fortunately being in name only. The manuscript is intended for publication in book form and is currently under review.

In addition to these major works, Joyce Segerman has published taxonomic papers on fleas, mites, mosquitoes and bugs. She is the acknowledged South African expert on fleas and lectures on these and other medically important arthropods to students studying for the Diploma in Tropical Medicine and Hygiene at the Medical School. Perhaps more importantly, she has over the years given ad hoc training in flea taxonomy to many entomologists and public health personnel from South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Tanzania. It is perhaps not widely known that in much of Africa plague is still a public health problem. Without sound flea identification, understanding of the epidemiology of the disease and routine monitoring would be impossible.

Mrs Segerman has given her skills and experience unstintingly to generations of students and to public health personnel needing advice on the control of flea, mite and lice infestations. She has never sought either academic honours or material gain but has quietly and with dedication and humour, worked in an important, but unglamorous, biomedical field. It is fitting to reward a lifetime spent in mastering a very intricate subject and passing relevant knowledge on to others directly concerned with disease prevention and cure.

The University takes great pleasure in showing its appreciation of the service she has rendered to it and to society at large by conferring, on Joyce Segerman the degree of Master of Science *honoris causa*.