

***Afskeidsgala vir prof Edna van Harte, Dekaan van die Fakulteit Krygskunde, aangebied
deur die Kommandant van die Militêre Akademie,
Saldanha, 18 November 2011***

***Opmerkings deur prof Russel Botman,
Rektor en Visekanselier van die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US)***

Honourable:

- **Lieutenant-General [TM] Nkabinde**, [the Chief of Human Resources in the South African National Defence Force]
- **Major-General [M] Mabuza**, [the General Officer Commanding of the Training Command]
- **Major-General [Lindile] Yam**, [the General Officer Commanding: Infantry Formation]
- **Colonel [Siseko] Nombewu**, [Acting Commandant of the Military Academy]
- **Senior Officers, Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers**
- **Prof [Edna] van Harte**, [the outgoing Dean of Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Military Science]
- **Dr [Sam] Tshehla**, [Secundus Dean of the Faculty and Prof van Harte's designated successor]
- **Dr [Paul] Cluver**, [Chairperson of the University Council]
- **Other Members of the University Council**
- **Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen ...**

... good evening to you all. *Goeienaand. Molweni.*

I am glad to be here with you. Thank you for this opportunity.

Now, my task tonight is both hard and easy. Hard, because we are saying farewell to a valuable colleague – Professor Edna van Harte, the outgoing Dean of our Faculty of Military Science. But easy, because paying tribute to someone of her calibre comes naturally

I think you would agree that to say someone “rose through the ranks” is one of the highest compliments you can pay a person. People in the military would understand this well. It means that you learnt the ropes on active duty in the field, and that you paid your dues to your organisation and to society at large.

This is very true of Professor Van Harte. From her time at the University of the Western Cape, to her 15 years in the United States, where she studied and worked at various universities, to her contribution at the Desmond Tutu Educational Trust on her return to South Africa, to her impact at Stellenbosch University since joining us in 2002 – initially as Executive Assistant in the office of the Rector in the time of my predecessor, then as Dean of Students, Interim Dean of the Faculty of Military Science; and then as Dean, she gained

valuable experience and was able to use that to make an invaluable contribution wherever she went.

As many of you would know, Edna faced a challenging situation when she took the helm of the Faculty. It was like stepping into a minefield with all kinds of unresolved matters just waiting to explode.

That she was keen to take on the challenge in the first place says a lot about her bravery. And that she pulled it off – as a woman, in a traditionally male environment, nogal! – says a lot about her skills and ability as a comrade and a leader.

Een van die kernaspekte van Edna se sukses in haar tyd as Dekaan is dat sy toegesien het dat 'n nuwe ooreenkoms tussen die Universiteit en die Weermag onderteken is.

Remember, she took over at a time in the history of the country when we were already well into our new political dispensation, but the agreement between the University and the Department of Defence still dated from the old order.

That's like going to war on a 21st century battlefield, armed with antiquated swords and muskets from a bygone era.

Clearly, the situation had to be resolved – and Edna got it right. She created a climate of trust in which relations between the Faculty and the Military Academy could be rebuilt and strengthened.

Prof Van Harte het ook 'n sterk akademiese etos gevestig en uitgebou. Dit was haar taak om die Fakulteit se voorgraadse program se gehalte te verseker, en sy was suksesvol. Sy het, naas navorsingsuitsette, ook gehelp om die internasionale statuur van die Fakulteit te verhoog deur middel van konferensies, navorsingsprojekte en dies meer.

Prof Van Harte's academic legacy will live on, to the benefit of students joining the Faculty and the Academy to study Military Science, and ultimately to better serve the people of our country, our continent and the rest of the world.

Die Universiteit en die Weermag deel 'n verbintenis tot die land en die toekoms van sy mense, en wat Edna reggekry het, is om die klem te laat val op dit wat ons in gemeen het.

Here we are today, two proud institutions – Stellenbosch University and the South African National Defence Force – united in our commitment to make a positive contribution to our nation, region and continent through the education of professional military officers.

At the University, the vehicle we are using for making a relevant contribution to society is our HOPE Project – so named because it captures our conviction that it is through the application of knowledge-based solutions that we can help counter the despair that arises when people don't see light at the end of the tunnel.

Whether it is through research into renewable energy, food security in our region, conflict resolution in communities torn apart by poverty and violence, or rural healthcare and development, we are throwing the weight of our science behind the country and the continent's most pressing needs.

Our vision for our country and continent is a future free from poverty, where the human dignity of all people is protected, where our social and ecological systems are healthy, and where peace, security, democracy and human rights are safeguarded.

I think I can say with certainty that there is plenty of common ground between us in this regard. And Edna van Harte played a key role in strengthening the bonds between us.

We look forward to expand on the foundation that she laid in future.

Edna, jy het hard gewerk, en verdien die ruskans wat voorlê. Maar soos ons jou ken, gaan jy jou energie in 'n volgende projek stort. Sterkte daarmee en mag dit jou bevrediging verskaf – nes jou bydrae tot hierdie Fakulteit van groot waarde was.

Edna, we understand that it is never easy to leave colleagues behind, to move on from a place where you had invested a lot of time and energy. But I am certain that you take comfort from the fact that the Faculty will be in good hands.

Dr Tshehla, you've got big shoes to fill. But I am sure the fact that you have been working closely with Prof Van Harte for some time now would have prepared you for the challenges that lie ahead. Let me also assure you again of our support.

Edna, ek weet dit kon nie aldag maklik gewees het vir jou in hierdie pos nie. Jy moes baie reis, en ek wil ook my waardering teenoor jou gesin uitspreek vir die ondersteuning wat hulle jou gebied het.

Ek hoop jy kan sê jy het ook die ondersteuning van die Universiteit ervaar, en dat jy soveel positiewe herinneringe van ons met jou saamvat as wat ons van jou behou.

Baie dankie vir alles wat jy gedoen het.

Edna, may you continue to make history.

Thank you.