



*Fellow of the Operations Research Society of South Africa*



## **John Hearne**

“I think OR could be much more valuable to society than it is. The problem is that most people are just not aware of the power of OR and what it can do for the systems they manage.”

**Citation.** *By Paul Fatti, on behalf of the Executive Committee of ORSSA.*

John Woodville Hearne was born and bred in Cape Town. He received a Bachelors degree in Applied Mathematics and Physics from the University of Cape Town in 1974 and an Honours degree in Applied Mathematics the following year. Believing that Nuclear Physics would solve the problems of the world, he took up a post with the Atomic Energy Board. Failing to contribute significantly towards that goal, he decided to move to the University of Zululand in 1977, to teach Applied Mathematics. In the meantime, he had been continuing his studies and received his Masters degree from the University of Pretoria in the same year. At Zululand, he found himself gradually shifting from classical Applied Mathematics towards Operations Research, as he realised that it was through OR, rather than Nuclear Physics, that he was more likely to solve the world's problems. So he tackled a problem relating to the development at Richards Bay, for which he received his PhD from the University of Pretoria in 1983. In the meantime, he also became a member of ORSSA.

After six years at Zululand, John moved to the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg, where he spent the next 20 years, rising to the post of Professor of Applied Mathematics. Here he continued his research in OR, focusing on the use of Systems Dynamics Modelling (and other OR techniques) to solve management problems, relating particularly to the conservation and sustainable utilisation of natural resources. It was for publications in this broad area that John twice received the Tom Rozwadowski Award from ORSSA, in 1992 and in 2000. From 1999 to 2000 he served as President of ORSSA (at the same time as he was serving as President of the Resource Modelling Association).

In 2003, John moved to Australia for domestic reasons, where he took up the position as Head of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University (now the School of Mathematical and Geospatial Sciences).

John has published widely in OR and related fields, focusing on modelling for problems relating to African wildlife, environmental management, estuarine management and biological control. He has served many years as Associate Editor of ORiON, is a contributing Editor for the International Abstracts in Operations Research and also serves on the Editorial Board of Ecological Modelling.

For his contribution to the Operations Research profession in general, in particular at the Universities of Zululand and Natal, and for his services to ORSSA over many years, John Hearne was duly and unanimously elected Fellow of the Operations Research Society of South Africa at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 3 September, 2006.