

HONORARY GRADUATE

Alan Robert Lipman

Alan Lipman was born on 6 June 1925 in the city of Johannesburg. He matriculated at Parktown Boys High, but the commencement of his studies in architecture was delayed by the Second World War. Between 1943 and 1945 he served as an Observer/Navigator in the South African Air Force and saw active service in North Africa. Demobilized, he read architecture at the University of the Witwatersrand and qualified in 1950. On graduating he moved to Britain where he worked with Maxwell Fry and Dame Jane Drew.

Lipman's professional and scholarly talents were to take root on his return to South Africa in 1958. In the professional sphere, he established the Durban office of a large architectural firm, opened his own practice and in 1961 was appointed Chief Architect of Greatermans Stores. During this period his writings on architectural theory in the acclaimed *South African Architectural Record*, gave notice of the erudite contributions he was to make in some 180 publications in the years that followed. His innovative work on architectural theory broke new ground and set intellectual standards for the discipline in South Africa.

Alan Lipman's scholarly endeavours were accompanied by an uncompromising and active involvement in anti-racist, anti-apartheid activities in the 1950's and 1960's. As a member of the Congress of Democrats and the Communist Party of South Africa, he was inevitably brought into conflict with the Nationalist Government - which culminated in a banning order in terms of the Suppression of Communism Act. This put an effective end to his work in South Africa and took him into exile in Britain in 1963. Despite leaving the Communist Party in 1968 in protest over the Soviet invasion of Hungary, he remained a stalwart member of the ANC, recently standing for election for local government in 1995.

Shortly after arriving in England, he took up a lecturing post in the Welsh School of Architecture, University of Wales, culminating in an Ad Hominem chair in 1977. He served as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning and on retirement in late 1989 was designated Professor Emeritus.

During the early years of his tenure in Cardiff, he undertook studies in sociology and completed the requirements for a PhD degree which, significantly and unusually, drew correlations between social engineering and design theory. It is primarily in this synthesis of architecture and sociology that his distinguished career and international reputation is founded. Over the years, the influence of his pioneering work on *Human Studies in Architecture*, which focussed on the application of social, cultural, psychological and physiological factors in architecture, spread to other schools in the United Kingdom and Europe. Like all great teachers, he was the source of inspiration for many graduate students who executed research in areas relating to his field of expertise. His scholarly studies were supported by numerous awards: the Cumbernauld Research Award in Urban Design, the RIBA Research Award in Architecture, a study Award of the British Spina Bifida Trust and of the Kings Fund, London, to mention a few.

An interesting aspect of Professor Lipman's writings - and indeed of the man himself - is manifest in his commitment to the elderly. He served as President of the British Gerontological Society for six years in the late 1970's and thereafter sat on the Executive Committee of that Society for a further eight years. This social concern extended to other 'special' groups, including physically handicapped children and young adults. His community - oriented work has now continued in this country.

Some ten years ago, he returned to southern Africa; to the Copperbelt University in Zambia, to the University of Natal and, ultimately, back to the University of the Witwatersrand where he has been involved in architectural and urban design classes and has used his experience in curriculum development. Since arriving back in South Africa Professor Lipman has extended his contribution beyond the scholarly domain to the wider public, his incisive and commentaries on contemporary architectural developments have appeared in numerous press outlets. His sustained commitment to Community Architecture is exhibited in such projects as a primary school in Tumahole, Parys; a health clinic in Kagiso; a head office for the National Union

of Metalworkers of South Africa in Newtown, and the Workers' Museum and Resource Centre, also in Newtown. The latter project earned two coveted architectural awards: the Conservation Merit Award for 1995 and the 1995/96 Award for Excellence of the Institute of South African Architecture.

Alan Lipman is a man of high principle who has made outstanding and original contributions to his discipline and to the field of architectural education in South Africa and abroad. The university is proud to honour this distinguished son by conferring the degree of Doctor of Architecture *honoris causa* on Alan Robert Lipman.