

# PIETERSBURG ART COLLECTION

The Municipal collection merits individual mention by virtue of the unique nature of its inauguration and growth. It owes its existence entirely to the zeal and motivation of a single person, Jack Botes, Town Clerk of Pietersburg, public-spirited artlover and indefatigable persuader.

From 1972, when the concept of an art collection to serve the cultural needs of a country community remote from the major centres began to germinate in his mind, Jack Botes went about his efforts of persuasion — coaxing funds from his Town Council, coaxing works from artists, coaxing donations from the public — with unceasing energy and irresistible enthusiasm. From the initial acquisition, three paintings purchased with a Council grant of R1 000 in 1972, the Collection grew rapidly and, before long, it had become the most important assemblage of art works in the Transvaal 'Platteland' (country district).

By 1982, more than 500 items of painting, graphic art and sculpture were listed in the catalogue. Those works were housed in the halls and grounds of the Pietersburg Civic Centre; but plans were under consideration for the construction of a municipal cultural centre, which would include a permanent art museum building, projected to open in celebration of the town's centenary in 1986.

Despite the continuously expanding number and scope of works in the Collection, no full-time Curator had yet been appointed by 1982 and Jack Botes retained sole responsibility for all administration, curatorial activity and development relating to his missionary project.