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Honorary Fellow of COL

It is my pleasure to present Dr. Myra Harrison as an Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning.

Dr. Harrison began her involvement in education with the Voluntary Service Organisation, teaching in Africa where she was, in her own words, “bitten by the education bug” and has been active in teaching ever since. For four and a half years, beginning in 1984 (during apartheid), Dr. Harrison worked for the South African Committee and Higher Education NGO, which was preparing, behind the scenes, ODL curricula during the struggle for equality and liberation.

Joining the UK Department for International Development as Education Advisor in South Africa, she soon was appointed Chief Education Advisor in London. As Chief Advisor, she became the UK government’s representative on COL’s Board of Governors and was a highly conscientious and active delegate. She became a great friend to COL and recommended a significant increase in the Department for International Development’s grant in 2000, which prompted other donors to increase their contributions so that COL could pursue its mission more comprehensively.

Dr. Harrison left DFID in 2001 to become a consultant, and in 2005, she led the Environmental Scan team for COL that sought Commonwealth-wide input for the construction of its current three-year plan.

Today, she is Education Advisor to the New Zealand Agency for International Development and is once more active in dialogue with COL as COL’s Focal Point in New Zealand.

Despite such a busy career, she acquired her PhD from Lancaster University by open and distance learning, an undertaking for which I have a great deal of sympathy and fellow feeling.

The most striking feature of Myra Harrison’s career is the deep respect, admiration and genuine affection she arouses in those who have worked with her.

Mr. President and Acting Chairman, I invite you to confer the title of Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning on a great friend of our organisation, Dr. Myra Harrison.