Tony Voss

Butler, Frederick Guy (1918–2001)

Guy Butler, poet, playwright, director, historian, autobiographer, essayist, academic and public intellectual, born and raised in the Eastern Cape, began his education at the Cradock High School and Rhodes University. He served in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War. Study at Oxford and a lectureship at Witwatersrand University led to his position as chair of English at Rhodes in 1952, the year of *Stranger to Europe: Poems, 1939*–*1949*. His traditionally oriented poetry seeks human connection across the barriers of history, culture and legally enforced racial segregation. An innovative teacher, he promoted the study of South African English literature and founded departments of speech and drama, linguistics, and journalism at Rhodes University. Throughout his life he strove to reconcile his local loyalties to the Eastern Cape, to his Settler forebears, and to his English heritage –he established the 1820 Monument, the National English Literary Museum, the Grahamstown Festival, and the Institute for the Study of English in Africa–with an inclusive South African national identity. He translated Afrikaans poetry into English, and in plays such as *Richard Gush of Salem* and *Demea* celebrated representative historical and imagined figures of interracial and intercultural rapprochement.

**References and further reading**

*Guy Butler: Essays and Lectures 1949-1991* (1994) edited and introduced by Stephen Watson, Cape Town: David Philip.

*Guy Butler: Collected Poems* (1999) edited and compiled by Laurence Wright, Cape Town: David Philip.