

# 'I was on top of the world'

By BRETT ADKINS

ANGRY climber Cathy O'Dowd is threatening to take legal action in the wake of continued rumours which cast doubt on whether she and expedition leader Ian Woodall actually made it to the summit of Everest.

The latest controversy to dog O'Dowd comes after Rhodes University's Rhodes Music Radio broadcast comments by students who felt a lecture by O'Dowd didn't deserve support.

O'Dowd, 27, delivered her audio-visual presentation, *The Everest Story — Step by Step*, at the university in Grahamstown yesterday, charging R20 for adults. She gave a free show for children in the morning.

But her arrival at the university, where she studied journalism, angered some members of Grahamstown's climbing fraternity, who said they would boycott the show.

Schoolteacher and rock-climbing expert Keith James told the Rhodes radio station that the expedition was "racist, sexist and undemocratic".

Insisting that she and Woodall did reach the summit of Everest, O'Dowd later told reporters that she had had enough of the gossip surrounding the expedition, and was considering legal action to stop the continued rumours.

In her presentation, O'Dowd gives a detailed account of the ill-fated expedition — which cost the life of fellow climber, photographer Bruce Herrod — and explains how she, Woodall and their team of Sherpas reached the summit on May 25.