

NOVEMBER 2018

## Past Student News



COLUMBA CATHOLIC COLLEGE  
CHARTERS TOWERS



Dear Past Students,

The year has seen much consolidation and growth, with many reasons to celebrate traditions past and present.

The annual past student's celebration, held in July in Brisbane was attended by Megan Lucas and was a truly wonderful gathering of past students from Mt Carmel and St Mary's. Brother Martin Sanderson, Christian Brother and Good Samaritan Sisters - Sr Ellen, Sr Dawn Gibson and Sr Ita were in attendance and shared many stories about the College and their experiences in their ministry.

Attendees regaled each other with stories of winning football premierships; chapel masses; boarding house stories and tales about how they still hold dear the values of the College. Our thanks is extended, once again, to Carmel Brougham (nee Lyons) for the organization and spirit that makes this an enduring gathering.

As part of our Year 12 graduation rite of passage, as each student left Mt Carmel Campus, they rang the Mt Carmel Bell and processed out through a campus guard of honour. The traditions of old, blending with the new, is a real testament to the solid foundations on which the College is built, so it can strive for excellence into the future. Year 12 students have begun placing 'interpretative signage' on our buildings to explain their significance. They have started on Mt Carmel Campus with R Block - Blessed Edmund Rice, Q Block - Bishop James Quinn and M Block - Saint Mary Mackillop. This will be an enduring project for Year 12's into the foreseeable future, across both campuses.

2018 also witnessed the launch of the St Columille Bursary for students across Years 3 to 12 who show outstanding achievement across attendance, academic achievement and effort, sport, leadership, culture and spiritual aspects. There will be 5 awarded in 2019 and one of the criteria in the application is: past student's

connection to the College. Further details can be accessed on our website.

We have had a few staff retire this year - Glenn Lang (1985-2018) retired in July after many years of loyal service to students in Charters Towers - across many domains - sporting, academic, spiritual and cultural; Sandra Archer (1999-2018) retired in November after 19 years of excellent, humble and dedicated in household services. Sharon McGuire (2003-2018) retired in December after 15 years in Payroll/Accounts. We wish all of these faithful and dedicated staff the very best in life as they share their gifts in retirement.

A major triumph for the College was the successful convening of the 2018 QISSRL Confraternity League Carnival. 48 teams competed from all over QLD with one from NSW (Casino); there were 1000 players aged 16 to 18 years old and a number of NRL clubs attended to scout future talent. Field 1, Monagle Oval, was livestreamed on the QISSRL Facebook page, which had over 600 000 hits for the week. There were 288 Man Of the Match awards handed out. This was a medal designed by past student and current Board Chair - Rohan Dixon. The Opening Ceremony was considered by all teams to be the best they had ever attended. The fireworks and primary students acting out the Gospel will certainly be remembered by all who attended. Over 1600 people attended that ceremony. Over 200 staff, families and Charters Towers locals volunteered at the carnival. We were known as the 'red army' with our distinctive red Confraternity shirts. At the end of the week, the local economy was 2 million dollars better off, Columba showcased its hospitality, community spirit and ability to host a first class carnival and the Columba Firsts won the Bowl. A wonderful result all round.

**Past students date claimer - your input is requested.**

To enable past scholars to regularly meet, a small committee of past students (who are also current staff members) has been established. Their remit: to come up with some dates for 2019 to hold the first of what will become a biennial gathering. The first would be held in Charters Towers, followed by a different venue every two years. This would complement, not replace, the annual Brisbane reunion in July. Possible dates are 14, 15, 16 June. The gathering might consist of a breakfast, tour of the campuses, viewing of the archives, social gatherings, mass, interschool football and netball matches and a formal dinner.

The committee and I would love your feedback and views around this. Please email your ideas and views to [paststudents@columba.catholic.edu.au](mailto:paststudents@columba.catholic.edu.au); or post your ideas to PO Box 274, Charters Towers.

God's Blessing and care for the holy season and I wish you and your families a blessed Christmas full of hope, joy, family and love.



Candi Dempster  
PRINCIPAL

# FOCUS ON CALLAN SOLARI (2003 - 2007)

The annual College Awards Night was held on Friday 20 October 2017. We were delighted to welcome back past student Callan Solari as our guest speaker. Following is a copy of Callan's address at Awards Night:



Good evening ladies and gentlemen, teachers, support, admin and dorm staff, family and friends and most importantly, good evening students.

Thank you for the kind introduction and that quick trip down memory lane – how time flies. When I was asked to give a speech this evening, my initial thought was that I hadn't been away from school for long enough, and then I realised that it has been 11 years since I last stood behind this lectern, wearing this tie and spoke to the Columba community.

May I begin by saying that I am truly honoured to be invited as guest speaker this evening. I have attended almost every speech night since I arrived at Columba 15 years ago, initially as a student, where we would take bets on how long Mrs Norton's Principal's address would go for, and more recently presenting my late father's memorial award, where I sit next to Mrs King and get my annual Columba update.

When I think of the calibre of the past students who have delivered the guest speech over those years, their careers and achievements and how they inspired me, even as an adult, I certainly don't feel as though I am accomplished enough to be considered in the same company. I'm hopeful that tonight, my story can inspire just one of you to be resilient, to stay determined and to strive to be better. And I promise I won't keep you as long as Mrs Norton used to.

I arrived at Columba as a 12 year old boy in 2003. I vividly remember how confused my emotions were when I arrived with my parents – excited and eager to dive into a new experience and meet new people, yet anxious about living away from my family. One thing was for sure, I could never have imagined the profound and lasting impact the next 5 years would have on shaping me into the man that stands before you tonight.

I had the personality that flourished in the boarding environment. I was relatively

confident, enjoyed human interaction, luckily didn't suffer from homesickness and needed to be kept busy. The routine of boarding life suited my slight OCD tendencies. I loved everything about being a boarder. All 3 dorms were full and the dorm staff had to sit along the back wall of the Mt Carmel dining room because the boy boarders filled it.

I learnt very quickly to respect the seniors, to sweet-talk the kitchen and laundry ladies and to take advantage of every opportunity that presented itself. I thrived on being involved in everything and developed a strong commitment to doing the best that I could do in anything that I did, whether it was showing cattle for the cattle club, playing any variety of sport, or simply attending class.

Students, you are afforded so many opportunities during your time at Columba, be it sporting, academic, or cultural and this evening clearly celebrates that. There is no need to attend a flashy, over-crowded metropolitan school to be successful. Columba gives you the grounding to launch into anything you set your mind to and you can achieve great things.

So there is my first take home message for tonight – immerse yourselves in College life, be involved and grab every opportunity with both hands.

On 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2004, at just 14 years of age, I lost my Dad after a property accident. Ironically, it was one of the best days that I ever had as a boarder. It was a Saturday, it wasn't cricket season and I hadn't returned home for the weekend, probably luckily. Myself and 3 others started a waterbomb fight, that quickly escalated to involving every boarder in a Seniors Vs the rest battle. By the end of it, Charters Towers was out of water balloons, Darkie's old hilux had been commandeered by the seniors as a troop carrier and everyone had a ball. And then my world came crashing down.

To lose my father at that time was extremely difficult. It's a crucial developmental period in any young man's life, the time when you start to learn practical skills, physically mature, and take on more responsibilities under the guidance of your father.

I'm not telling you this for you to feel sorry for me, because we all experience varying levels of psychological and emotional trauma at some stage during our lives, be it the loss of a loved one, bullying, or even missing out on selection in a sporting team. But it's how we respond to these episodes

of trauma, these obstacles in our lives, that define us. As Nelson Mandela once said, "Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

Now I am certainly not qualified to be providing psychological advice, my patients can't even talk back to me. But for what its worth, I think it is crucial that as young people, you equip yourselves with various coping mechanisms to help you through the difficult times, because unfortunately, the reality is that you will be faced with an unpleasant situation at some stage during your school life.

I could have easily 'fallen off the rails', but with the support network of the Columba community, to whom I am forever indebted, my family and friends, I consciously decided to use my difficult experience as a driving force for success for the rest of my schooling, and to be honest, it still drives me today.

And there lies my 2<sup>nd</sup> life lesson for you all – develop resilience, pick yourself up off the canvas and go again and have a support network, large or small, who you can confide in when the world isn't being kind.

After graduating, I headed straight to university to start Vet school. I would have loved to have enjoyed a gap year, but I knew if I went chasing cows, I'd never have returned to start uni. It was a long 5 years of difficult study but I was thankful for the study habits I established during my time as a boarder at Columba, the routine of a daily period dedicated to studying held me in good stead throughout the degree.

I was one of the lucky ones who always knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. Even so, I can still remember the pressure I felt towards the end of high school deciding on my future. At the time, I thought my direction in life would be dictated by my QCS result and as such, placed an enormous amount of pressure on myself. And while a good result provided me direct entry to my degree, I soon realised that it was all unnecessary stress – the majority of my colleagues didn't gain immediate access to vet school, but at the end of the day, they got the exact same qualification as I had. They proved to me that there is always a way to achieve your goal if you are dedicated enough.

And so my third and final piece of advice - Success requires discipline, determination and sacrifice. If you want something bad enough, set a goal, work hard and anything is achievable.

Thank you, good night and God bless.



# CONFRATERNITY 2018

In 2018, Columba was honoured to host the Confraternity Rugby League Carnival (Confro) for the third time, having previously hosted in 1991 and 2002. Mount Carmel and now Columba have competed in this competition since 1982 and it is a week that holds special memories for many of our past students.

The Carnival now attracts 48 schools and colleges from throughout Queensland and northern New South Wales. The size of the competition certainly challenged the school community logistically, but in the first week of July, the College stood proud in conducting one of the most successful carnivals to date, with many of our visitors complimenting the organising committee on the seamless week.

Our College community spirit was evident throughout the week with over 200 volunteers filling roles from ball boys and girls, match day officials, food and café workers, bar attendants, cleaners, grounds maintenance, the list goes on. The 'red shirt brigade' as they became affectionately known were everywhere and looked resplendent in their First XIII replica volunteer shirts.

Many past students gave up their week or supported the Carnival in so many ways. Michael Collins (Collins Pharmacy) was again a major sponsor, while Stephen Curley (Curley Transport), Noel, Troy and Tanya Jesberg (Whitehorse Tavern), Matthew Geaney (Geaney's Real Estate) Conor Kersh (Windmill Bricklaying), Darren O'Neill (Lontrans Transport), Alby and Kate Flood and family and Thane McCabe (CASMACH Pty Ltd) all chipped in as Carnival sponsors to assist with the substantial costs of conducting the Carnival.

In the weeks leading up to the event, Haydn Champion prepared the number templates to add the finishing touches to our ovals, whilst Scott Bliss toiled over a number of weekends to produce a second scoreboard which will be used for many years to come.

Matt Bennetto and Michael Lyons hosted a number of the participating teams in their farm stay accommodation at Virginia Park and Wambiana Stations, and received rave reviews from many of the visiting Brisbane teams.

Many others gave up their week to assist. Michael Peck, Jeffrey Burton and Matthew Dixon supervised up to 8 games of rugby league each day, while Jacob Peck, Max Harrison, Jack Dixon and Justin Dixon never stopped all week as the game day co-ordinators. Dr Reuben Butler returned to his former College as the Confro medical supervisor and he was ably assisted by Martin Brennan who is completing his physiotherapist studies.

Romildi Busiko (nee Da Rin) volunteered to take on the mammoth task of being our Laundry Co-ordinator ensuring all jerseys, shorts and socks were all washed and ready for play each day, along with the hard working laundry staff.

Kelly Egan, who is currently the General Manager at the Wests Tigers, pulled out his old red jersey and returned to mentor his beloved First XIII and entertained as our guest speaker at the very successful Coaches & Managers Annual Dinner. Michael Bethel, with his wife Linda, decorated the venue in a true western theme and even had one of their long horn cows mingling through the crowd to add to the country theme. The after party was hosted by Noel Jesberg, who was happy to entertain us with his own heroics on the football field as an impromptu after dinner speaker.

Our food vans and café were filled with past students doing their bit with chief organisers, Colleen Young (nee Jones), Leesa Stevenson (nee Walkey) and Tonya Burgoine (nee Walkey) overseeing a small army of volunteers. Among the throng were spotted: Alex Brandis, Jennifer Oss, Deirdrie Martell (nee Oss), Stacey Reiffel, Larissa Crowley (nee Lestone), Catherine Ford (nee Walkey) Jamie-Lee Coward and Shirley Champion (nee Hill). Thank you again to you all.

In the discreet but well patronised Minjar Vernadah Bar, Dan Kyle, Murray Stringer and Michelle Burns (nee Laidlow) proudly served many past students, who talked of past glories on the fields they were overlooking. Michelle was ably supported by her daughters, Lara & Chloe.

On the Monday evening in the bar, Matt Geaney, assisted by Robbie Katter, auctioned off the First XIII commemorative jerseys, with some feverish bidding from many past students (present and on the phone) keen to get 'their' jersey. It proved a wonderful night of camaraderie and storytelling. The highest bid of the night came from David Lyons, who purchased the coveted Number 6. David was everywhere over the whole week helping out wherever he could.

In the official administration tent, Megan Lucas had the responsibility of ensuring each game started and finished on time, while Jo-Anne Thompson (nee Kerle) tended to ad hoc requests all week. Andrew Butler found his true niche in life, patrolling the fields all week as a Queensland selector.

Aside from the volunteers, there were numerous past students venturing onto their old stomping grounds and throwing their full support behind their College team and brimming with pride on how well the grounds and facilities were presented. Quentin Kersh once again voluntarily sponsored the Columba Man of the Match awards.

The culmination of a great week was the performance of the Columba boys taking out the Confraternity Bowl and defeating local rivals All Souls and Thornburgh along the way. The team was coached by Jacob Stainkey, ably assisted by water runner Jack Shun. Both looked like they still wanted to don the jersey one last time! It was a great finale to a great week for Columba and one the whole College community, both

past and present, should be justifiably proud.

Rohan Dixon  
Co-convenor







## MATRON DULCIE MITCHEL

Earlier this year Matron Dulcie Mitchell celebrated her 90th birthday at the Dalrymple Villa. "Mum to all the kids", Dulcie worked as matron at Mt. Carmel College from 1952-1992.

On 3 December, the College welcomed Dulcie back to the College for a tour and morning tea with her niece Jenny, her brother Bill and past students Rhonda (nee Berryman) and John Lyons. Dulcie was delighted to meet Principal, Candi Dempster and catch up with Staff Members Megan Lucas and Michael Peck.

## JUST MARRIED



Brook Jurss (2007-2013) married Darcy Hill on 4 September 2018.



Aleesha Philo married (1998-2006) married Travis Watson on 5 May 2018.



Monique Champion (2008-2012) married Robbie Kirk



Rachael Bell (1989-1993) married Chris Hill on 8 September 2018.



Nicholas Martell (1998-2004) married Jenna Rizzoli on 3 March 2018.

## CAUGHT ON CAMPUS



Brother Marty Sanderson visited the College earlier in the year and caught up with Michael Peck and Glenn Lang.



Past Staff Anne and Tom Kruger visited the College in 2018 and were impressed with all the changes around the Mt. Carmel and St. Mary's Campuses



Past Student Robbie Katter (1982-1993 and College Captain 1993) visited the College earlier this year.



Past Student Darin Marshall (1981-1985 and College Captain 1985) visited the College earlier this year and was excited to catch up with Mr Peck.

## WITH SYMPATHY

**Robbie Smith (1958-1959)**  
Passed away February 2018

**Sylvia Moretto (1961-1962)**  
Passed away February 2018

**Lenore Churchyard (nee Jamieson 1961)**  
Passed away October 2018

**Ada Rotondo (nee Segnanfreddo 1944)**  
Passed away October 2018

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