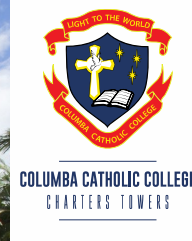


Incorporating Past Students from
St Columba's School,
St Mary's College &
Mt Carmel College

DECEMBER 2023

Past Student News



Dear Past Students,

2023 has been a year of reflection, community engagement and growth. It certainly has been an eventful year with a busy school program. Columba Catholic College continues to be a school of choice in the Charters Towers area with 40 new students and their families joining the College in 2023. Students continued to enliven the spirit of our community through their participation in a range of spiritual, academic, sporting, cultural, leadership and community opportunities.

This year, we have acknowledged 25 years since the amalgamation of St Mary's College, St Columba's Primary School and Mt Carmel College. As we stand now as Columba Catholic College 25 years on, we are strengthened by our common Catholic Christian values; our beliefs and our traditions permeate every aspect of school life.

Our traditions live on. Traditions such as cream buns on Founder's Day; wearing our uniform with pride and marching in synergy on ANZAC Day; a sporting tradition of competing with respect, spirit and determination; a tradition of being prayerful and being diligent and mission centered and caring for those on the margins. These ways of being are proudly living in our community today and are nurtured through respectful partnerships with our families, our College staff, our students and parish.

Some of the highlights for 2023 have been our Founders' Day celebrations and Colour Fun Run, the Ignite Youth Conference, Inter School Competitions, the Chinese Cultural Exchange, the Catholic Schools Carnival and Under 8s Day.

This year has been a time for planning and laying the foundations for future projects and is a reflection of our commitment to Christian stewardship and future thinking. In 2023 we have invested in a number of capital projects including the commissioning of the Mt Carmel Solar Farm; the upgrade to the Mt Carmel Campus Gym; the completion of Stage 1 Renovation of Comerford Residence (amenities block) and the re-roof of Ridley residence. With the support of our CSPA we have installed new industrial fans into the St Mary's Campus undercover area and plans for the installation of new playground equipment at St Mary's Campus in 2024 are well underway.

I was blessed to join in the gathering of our Past Students group in July in Brisbane to share updates and progress of the College across

2023. I was proudly joined by Year 11 student Abbey Turner who was able to provide a student perspective on life, learning and projects underway at the College. Thank you to our past students for continuing to gather. Special thanks to Carmel Brougham for coordinating this event. We were also joined by past students Michael Collins (1956-1964), Barrett Wherry (1964-1972), Billy Norton (1960-1963) and Barry Peters (1966-1968) at the State Schoolboys Rugby League Championship Final in Brisbane in September. Congratulations to our First XIII Rugby League team who, led by Past Student Rohan Dixon, took away the title after an outstanding year of Rugby League. Thanks to our past and present students and their families for their support of our students.

I would also like to extend our prayers and congratulations to past student of Columba Catholic College (2004-2014) Will Brennan who was recently ordained a Deacon at the Sacred Heart Cathedral in Townsville. Congratulations to Will. We wish him an abundance of blessings as he undertakes this call to mission and service.

Our College museum continues to be well attended and supported. Thank you to those past students and families who have donated artifacts for our records. This year we have been undertaking an archiving project supported by Townsville Catholic Education to ensure our records are safely maintained into the future.

We acknowledge within our newsletter this year, with love and support the members of our community who are recently married, and we pray for those members of our community who have entered into God's care.

Thank you for continuing to be a part of our community. May God bless and keep you and may our 2023 Past Students Newsletter continue to ignite a passion for Catholic Education in our community. Many blessings for a happy and holy Christmas.



Melissa Turner
COLLEGE PRINCIPAL

FOCUS ON PAST STUDENT WILL BRENNAN (PAST STUDENT 2004 - 2014)

Will Brennan left Columba at the end of 2014 with his family to the cooler climate of Toowoomba. Will completed his education at Downlands College where he became involved in the social justice group 'Jules' and later the captain of the group in his final year.

During his final year at school 2016, Will attended a 'Quo Vastis' weekend at Holy Spirit Seminary. The weekend was for those men who wanted to explore a calling to the vocation of priesthood.

After this weekend, Will returned home and energetically told his family that he wanted to join the priesthood. At that time, there was a vocations house, 'Canali House', in Brisbane which was available for men thinking about the priesthood to have a discernment year. They would live in community in the house but have jobs in the everyday world. Throughout the year, they would join the seminary in different activities, liturgies and follow the daily ritual of prayer, common to the ordained ministry of priesthood.

Will joined Canali House in 2017. He was in the house with 9 other men and a live-in priest director. Will was employed by Centre Care in Brisbane for the year. Towards the end of 2017, Will applied to join the seminary for the Townsville Diocese. Before acceptance, psychological assessments are conducted along with interviews.

Will then enjoyed a European holiday with a mate, dog sledding in Norway and seeing the Northern lights as well as touring the Vatican, the Western front, visiting Belgium and Netherlands.

Will joined the seminary in 2018 with 7 other men. Here he lived in a community house with 8 others where they shared the cooking and other chores around the seminary. Will commenced his Bachelor of Theology and Philosophy at ACU that year as well as other seminary units. Each Advent season, Will went on placement in a different parish in the Townsville Diocese. He went to Ingham, Charters Towers, Hughenden, Richmond, Winton and the Good Shepherd parish Kirwan over those years.

Will completed his Bachelor degree in 2021 being awarded the University Medal for his academic success. At the end of 2021 and during 2022, Will started an Associate Diploma of Languages majoring in Italian as well as starting on a Master of Theology.

Also during this time, Will was on a Plenary Council writing team for the discernment paper: **HOW IS GOD CALLING US TO BE A CHRIST-CENTRED CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA THAT IS Open to Conversion, Renewal & Reform?** He met with his group to discern from the raw data of the people what to write in this paper which led to the agenda of the Plenary Council.

He then had a pastoral year in Townsville in Kirwan parish in 2022 which he found most rewarding.

In December 2022, the seminary students and staff went to Rome for a tour. On this tour they had an audience with Pope Francis and Will met and shook hands with the Pope.

2023 saw Will back at Holy Spirit Seminary completing his Master of Theology. Now that it is completed and all other conditions have been met, Will was ordained in Townsville as a deacon on 7 December 2023. He will be working in parishes until his priestly ordination.

Article supplied by Will's Mother - Monica Brennan (Past Teaching Staff 2006-2014).



L to R: Colleen Young (nee Jones Past Student 1957-1969, Past Staff 1982 - 2017), Monica Brennan (Will's Mother - Past Teaching Staff 2006-2014), Will Brennan(2004-2014), Paul Brennan (Will's Father - Past Columba Catholic College Finance Committee Member) and Deputy Principal - Pastoral/ Residential Dan Kyle (1980-1984).

PAST STUDENTS' NEWS

REUNION OF THE 1965 MCC SENIOR CLASS

A group of fourteen of the original thirty-seven students from the 1965 senior class gathered in Brisbane on the weekend of 15th and 16th July in Brisbane to catch up with one another. Several others were unable to attend for various reasons. The reunion began with a meet and greet at the Merthyr Bowls Club on Friday, 14th July and then a formal dinner at Tattersall's Club on Saturday, 15th July. We were delighted to have Brother Vince Connors in attendance. Vince is the only surviving Christian Brother from 1965 and was O.C. of the school cadet unit as well as the coach of the 1st XIII. Vince returned to Carmel as the Principal in the late 70s and guided the amalgamation of Mt Carmel, St Mary's and Columba Primary School into Columba Catholic College. Also in attendance was Brother Marty Sanderson who was the principal in the late 80's and early 90's.

On Sunday, 16th July we attended mass at St Patrick's Church in the Valley. By coincidence the day was the feast day of Our Lady of Mt Carmel and we are grateful to Carmel Brougham for inviting us along. Mrs Melissa Turner, College Principal, attended as well and gave us an update on some developments and improvements at the College.

Article supplied by Dennis McCloskey (1962-1965)



UPDATE OF DETAILS

To keep in touch, we ask you to please keep your details up to date. If you know of any Past Student currently not on the mailing list - please encourage them to visit the College Website: [Past Student Update of Details](#) to update their contact details.



JUST MARRIED



Patrick Brennan (2003-2012) married Indy Edgeley in Port Douglas 30 May 2022



Evan McGuire (2000-2012) married Courtney Joy Risdale 2nd September 2023 at the Texas Longhorns Property, Charters Towers.



Shae Brimrose (2014-2016) & Ryan Enright-Hodgetts (2004-2014) were married on 30th September 2023 in Charters Towers.



Kalan Lococo (2006-2010) married Anna Imeson on the 20th October 2023 at Elite Rodeo Grounds Blackwater Townsville.



Martin Brennan (2003-2014) married Gracie Hemer at Woolgoolga Beach 20th October 2023.



Erin Morris (1999-2011) married Allan Ramsay (2007-2011) on 18th November at the Charters Towers Golf Club



Shannon Day (2010-2014) married Brandon De Luca on the 23rd September 2023 at her grandparent's farm "Daydawn" Theebine.

Photo right: Julie Maree Hamilton (1998-2003) married Timothy Hudson in an intimate wedding ceremony which took place in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada 29th June 2023. To incorporate their Australian wedding celebration with family and friends, Julie and Tim combined it with their Queensland honeymoon. The Aussie Celebration and reception was held in the grounds at Affordable Gold City Motel, Charters Towers, home of Julie's parents, Alan & Cherylle. Close friend Jess Boyden (Past Student 2000-2004) officiated the ceremony with flowers by Lacie Clark (Past Student 2003-2011), Charters Flowers.

Julie & Tim reside in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada where Julie is a Master Barber /Mentor & Trainer for Tommy Guns Barber shops Edmonton, Canada. Julie has resided in Canada for the last 8 years.



PAST STUDENTS' NEWS

FIRSTS XIII RUGBY LEAGUE CONFRATERNITY AND NRL SCHOOLBOY CUP STATE CHAMPIONS

Our Firsts XIII Rugby League squad had a year to remember. The team won what has now become known as the 'Triple Crown' winning the Townsville Blackhawks Cup, Neil Bloxside Plate at Confraternity and the state-wide NRL Schoolboy Trophy. The squad was coached by past student, Rohan Dixon. His Assistant Coach was another past student, Scott Bliss. Despite neither of these two men having any of their own children at school age, they still give up their time coaching our College Firsts.

Interschool Competition - The season started in February with Columba defeating archrivals BTC (36-10) and All Souls St Gabriel's (14-10) in the Interschool Rugby League Competition.

Mt Carmel Cup - In March, Columba won the Mt Carmel Shield by winning their 3 pool games and defeating Abergowrie 20-10 in the Grand Final.

Townsville Blackhawks Cup - In Term Two, a brand-new competition was formed, the Townsville Blackhawks Cup, consisting of the 3 Charters Towers Colleges and two schools from Townsville, Ryan Catholic College and Southern Cross. In the Grand Final, Columba hosted All Souls St Gabriel's on Monagle Oval and had a memorable 48-6 win. The team were now undefeated for the year heading into the Confraternity Carnival.

Confraternity Carnival - The Confraternity Carnival was hosted by St Laurence's College in Brisbane in the first week of the June school holidays. Columba won 5 out of 6 games and were victorious 16-12 in the Grand Final over St Laurence's College. This was the first win for Columba in the Neil Bloxside Plate since 2013. Coach, Rohan Dixon, was named Coach of the QLD Merit Team, selected from the 48 schools competing. A highlight was the number of past students who came to watch the boys throughout the week and address the squad at the end of games. Coach, Rohan Dixon, has certainly been a great link between players from the 'Mt Carmel days' to the present squads, since taking over as head coach in 2016.

NRL Schoolboy Trophy – State wide - After winning the Townsville Blackhawks Cup, the team returned in Term 3 and defeated Thuringowa State High 54-6 which meant they had qualified for the finals of the QLD NRL Schoolboy Trophy as the Townsville region winner. Columba defeated Bentley Park College, Cairns 42-16 in the Quarter-Final and defeated Sarina State High 32-0 in the Semi-Final. The team had now qualified for the QLD Grand Final of the NRL Schoolboy Cup in Brisbane against Xavier College, Hervey Bay. With the match livestreamed by the Courier Mail, the entire College watched and cheered on in the Dining Room as Columba defeated Xavier College, Hervey Bay 26-14 at Langlands Parks in Brisbane. Again, many of our past students were there to cheer on the squad with Kelly Egan addressing the team before warm up. Michael Collins famously said during the celebrations, "40 years after a heartbreaking loss for Rohan Dixon at Langlands Park in the 1983 team, you've got the win for your coach!"

Players Signed by NRL Clubs - Congratulations to new Past Students (from the Class of 2023) Assariah Lenoy and Mathias Santo-Hero. During the season, our Captain and fullback, Assariah, a boarder from Palm Island, was signed by the NQ Cowboys on the back of dominating the Townsville Blackhawks Competition in Term 2. After claiming Player of the Division at the Confraternity Carnival, our Vice-Captain and halfback, Mathias, a Charters Towers local, was signed by the Dolphins. For the year, the Firsts XIII played 22 matches, winning every single competition they competed in. A massive thank you must go to past students, Head Coach, Rohan Dixon and Assistant Coach, Scott Bliss for their tireless efforts working with the squad this year to make it a year nobody will forget.



It was great to see so many Past Students attend the final for the NRL Schoolboy Trophy in Brisbane to support our students. Pictured from left: Michael Collins (1956-1964), Barry Peters (1966-1968), Billy Norton (1960-1963) and Barrett Wherry (1964-1973).



Past Student Kelly Egan (1984-1986) addresses the team before warm up for the NRL Schoolboy Trophy.



Justin Dixon (1998-2010), Rohan Dixon (1972-1983), current staff member Gerard Webber and Scott Bliss (1986-1990)

PAST STUDENTS' NEWS

REACHING OUT

Russell G Barret (1966-1967) emailed the College earlier this year. Russell is hoping to catch up with any past students that attended the College during his time. He can be contacted via email: russgeorgeb@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to past student (1954-1957) and past staff member (1981-2003), Babe Dixon (nee Roughan), on being presented with the Yellow Rose Award at the ZONTA Women Inspiring Women Luncheon in Charters Towers earlier this year. This award acknowledges the significant contribution Babe has made to our local community with her many volunteering roles over the years - an award that is very well deserved.

Congratulations to past student Andrew Butler (1978-1979) on receiving the inaugural Columba Medal at the 2023 College Awards Night. The Columba Medal recognises outstanding school service by a member of staff. This staff member is recognised by their peers and the community as being highly professional, displaying excellent interpersonal skills with colleagues, students and community members. They are strongly committed to self improvement and improvement of colleagues. Andrew is pictured with wife, Mary.



WITH SYMPATHY

Brother Neil Calasanctius Langan
(Mt. Carmel College 1957, Principal Mt. Carmel College 1988, Columba Catholic College 1998)
Passed away 10th January 2023.

Margaret Gibson (nee Bourke 1943-1946).
Passed away 11th January 2023.

Veronica Balch (nee Bourke 1946-1947)
Passed away 30th March 2023.

Neil Arnold (1949-1952)
Passed away 19th April 2023.

Shirley Fanning (nee Rule 1947-1948)
Passed away 23rd June 2023.

June Anne Ginns (Nee Hanlon - 1956-1957)
Passed away on 2 August 2023.

Stephen Bluey McDowall (1976-1978)
Passed away 24th August 2023.

Brother Bryden Thomas Edward Walker
(Principal - Mt. Carmel College 1985)
Passed away 11 October 2023.

Sister Teresa Mary (Principal St. Columba's School early-mid 1960's)
Passed away 13th October 2023.

William (Billy) Moore (1950s)
Passed away 18th October 2023.

Brother Terry Kelly (Deputy Principal - Mt Carmel College 1981-1984)
Passed away 5th November 2023



JOHN 1:9-10

"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
He was in the world, and the world was made through him..."

Merry Christmas