



MERCY COLLEGE ALUMNI

Where are they now?

Introducing:

Carol Tenace

Class of 1979 Form 4

***Thank you for sharing
your story!***



Tell us what it was like for you attending College?

I have fond memories of attending Mercy College. I remember the daily ritual of the bus trip from Fawkner to Coburg when the mornings began with greeting my school friends at the bus stop.

I had come from a state school therefore I was not used to wearing a uniform and the travel to school was only a 5-minute walk. I was excited about beginning a whole new chapter in my life, although leaving primary school as one of the senior students to starting at Mercy as one of the junior students and in a much bigger school did initially feel a little daunting.

There were only a handful of girls who came to Mercy College from my state primary school and I still catch up with those girls today ... 50 years on!

We finished early every Wednesday which gave me the opportunity to walk home to Fawkner. This became my weekly routine.

I recall the first few days of school when we had to line up and Sister Aiden (who was quite elderly) would ensure our dresses were a certain length and not considered too short. I had a habit of crossing my legs under the desk and Sister Aiden would not hesitate hitting my legs with a ruler ... telling me it was not the correct way to sit!

We had a yearly walkathon where we would walk to Greenvale Reservoir which was so much fun, albeit we were exhausted by the end of it.

I was very much a chatter box and was always being reprimanded for talking in class. When I was in Form 2 Green, I remember my home teacher, Ms Daws, getting frustrated and moving me so often for whoever she sat me next to I ended up befriendng. She eventually seated me in the back corner at a single desk ... but ... I still managed to make friends and chat with the student in front of me. Poor Ms Daws! I certainly gave her some grief!



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My favourite subject was typing which I excelled in (later spending 22 years as a Legal Secretary for a top tier law firm). Typing was taught on a manual typewriter, and I think we had one electric typewriter in the class to practice on. I was so excited I had reached 35 wpm, which was quite fast.

One of my favourite teachers was Mrs Brunken who not only taught us English in Year 10, she actually made it enjoyable and in turn encouraged us to do our best. A few of us have reconnected with Mrs Brunken via facebook and have enjoyed catching up in the last few years.

Back then the school only taught up to Form 4. The highlight of Form 4 was the School Ball. It was so much fun. Weekly excursions to the various colleges, and the boys coming to Mercy for dance practice. The Ball was a great event and a tradition that is still going strong to this day.



Bottom row: Tina Volta, ?, Carol Tenace, Rosalba?, Margie Hurley, Rosanna Villella, Maureen?, Connie Trinchi, Paula Incerti, Kerry Baxter

2nd row: Vivien Slavich, Pina, Roberta, Lucy Christofaro, Diana Faba, Angela Abramo, Mrs Joss,

3rd row: Josie Scollo, Marianna?, Laura Lattuada, Vittoria (?)Chan, Suzie Zotti

4th row: Salvina Failla, Teresa Mattei, Tiziana Reginato, Italia Ascenzo

(I have not been able to remember all the names and for some, I know of their married names



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Boat Cruise – Form 4 Break Up Party

Vittoria, Rosanna, Josie, Diana, Italia

Did you set out with a career plan?

I always knew I wanted to be a secretary but chose to go to Geoghegan College to complete Form 5, (Year 11), before going to Business College.

I also knew I wanted to work for a legal firm, which took a few years of perseverance before it finally came to fruition.

What were the significant milestones that have impacted your life journey so far?

- *Completing Form 5, Year 11 in 1980*
- *Completing Certificate of Business Studies in Honours at Stotts Business College in 1981*
- *Obtaining my first after school job in 1979 at Coles, Coburg which gave me so much confidence, independence and the ability to engage with other students who worked there from other schools*
- *Commencing my career as a legal secretary which lasted 22 years – during this time I made many lifelong friends as well as travelling to many overseas destinations.*
- *My first trip to Italy was made even more special with the company of my mother and being shown where she grew up and meeting my cousins for the first time in my 20s*
- *Buying my first home which was a huge achievement in my mid 20s*
- *Always had a close bond with my family which continues with my brother and his family as my parents have both passed away. I adore my 2 nieces who have added so much joy to our lives.*
- *Working at University of Melbourne for 7 years*
- *Being made redundant from University of Melbourne which I took as a blessing, affording me the luxury of taking some time out to reassess what I wanted to do next*
- *Joining the Homestay Program through SACE and English teaching college*
- *My current position at Diabetes Victoria where I have gained further skills*



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How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your work and the people you support?

I work for Diabetes Victoria and we are an essential service. I have been fortunate to continue working through the pandemic from my home.

I mostly work in Bequests and deal with people in an older age demographic. One of my assignments while working remotely is calling our members and checking on their wellbeing. This is proving to be an extremely rewarding undertaking as I wasn't aware of the extent of how people were affected by the isolation. Many older Australians who live alone and are restricted from contact with the outside world are thrilled with my check up call. So much so, having people say that I had made their day knowing that someone cares how they are managing during the pandemic is, for me, a truly rewarding feeling to know that I am making a difference to their quality of life during these unsettling times.

Where has your career path taken you in terms of connecting with wider organisations, meeting people of varying cultures; locally and internationally?

I have been privileged to have worked for significant and influential organisations which include involvement in many high-profile cases and feel blessed to have worked with amazing people during my varied careers, many of which have become lifelong friends.



I enjoy hosting short stay international students from all over the world, and am referred by some as their 'Aussie Mum'.

This has given me the opportunity to meet so many students from different cultures and has helped me to become more open minded and inquisitive about the world around us. I have hosted students from Vietnam, Germany, South America, Japan, China and Thailand.

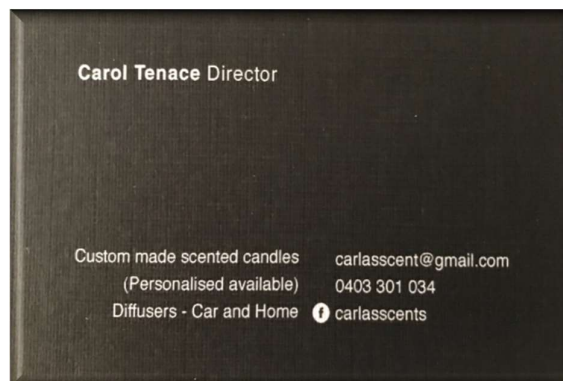
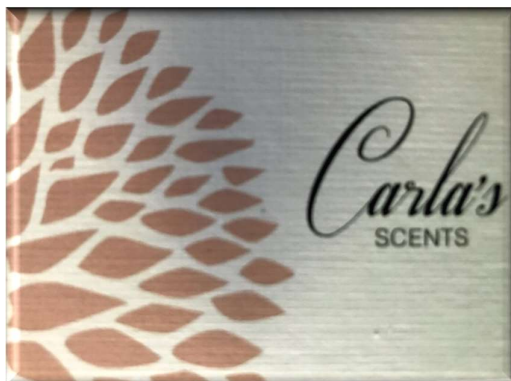
Above is an image of a few of my international students that I host from Japan, Peru and China.

I enjoy flexing my creative flair which a couple of years ago led to starting up my own hobby business, Carla's Scents. I custom make scented candles and diffusers which proudly has been relatively successful for a venture that was initially a hobby.



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Reflecting on school friendships, what makes this special?

I have maintained my friendships with a number of my peers and with some, only reconnecting just 10 years ago but it has since been so much fun to catch up regularly and share lots of funny stories from our teenage years. We feel proud of our friendship and look forward to making many more special memories.

It has added to my life journey and brought much happiness, joy and also support. It is amazing on how the years just fly by and it reminds me how far we have all come, and the diversity our paths have taken ... now all in our 50s!



*Connie (Troise) DiPasquale and me
(our friendship dates back 50 years)
This was taken several years ago at one of
the Mercy College Open Days*

Connie, my first and longest friendship. Our first meeting was at Fawcner Primary School in Prep.

We have had periods of time throughout our lives where we haven't seen each other very often but every time we connected it was like no time had passed. She even worked with me at Mallesons for a few years.



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*2013 – Supporting our dear friend Julie (Dagostini) DiGianvincenzo on her wedding day ... you could say we were the 'middle aged bridesmaids' ...
Pictured: Connie, Julie, Bernadette and myself. (friends since primary school)*

*2015 – Year of
1979 Reunion
This reunion took
momentum thanks
to Facebook and
before long we had
so many attendees
that we needed to
hire out a room in
Carlton.*

*Too many names
to list!*



2015 – Year of 1979 Reunion

Connie Barbagallo, me, Domenica (Marafioti) Belante, Connie (Troise) DiPasquale, Gabriella Parente, Carolyn Mollomby



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Early 2019 - Year of 1979 catch up

Bottom Row: Sarina Camuglia, Vanda Fortunato, Marina Bonaguro, Vittoria Chan, Connie (Troise) DiPasquale,

Second Row: Lucy Salvatore, Italia Ascenzo, Bernadet (Sulot) Lemmo, Julie (D'agostini) DiGianvincenzo, me, Diana Faba, Rosanna Villela, Teresa Mattei

What's next for you?

I now work part time for Diabetes Victoria and have created a few income streams (hobby business, extras acting and homestay program) to have more variety in my working life and more flexibility to enjoy life and any new experiences that come my way.

I hope to get into home renovating and more travel!

What message of encouragement, advice would you give to current students?

Ensure you relish every moment of your College days. Absorb as much learning as you can for far too soon these days become a distant memory. I was so keen on growing up and going to work. There is a whole lifetime for that. Your learning and the friendships you make are important lessons of growth. Making special school friendships that extend to and enhances your life journey, is truly a blessing to behold.